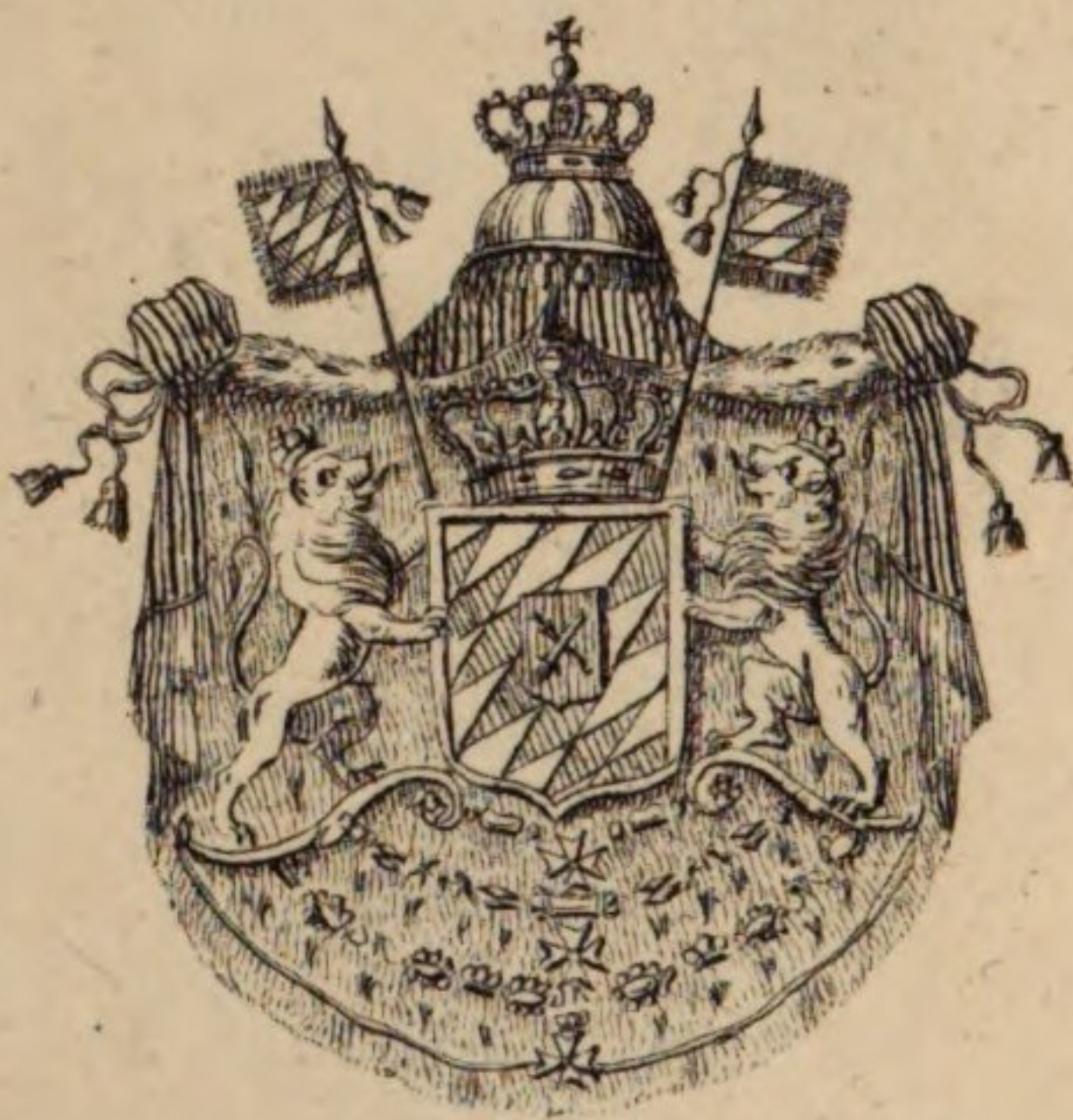


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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF THE
REV. DR. E. YOUNG.
WITH
THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

Cooke's Edition.

When flatter'd crimes of a licentious age
Reproach our silence, and demand our rage;
When purchas'd follies, from each distant land,
Like arts, improve in Britain's skilful hand;
When the law shews her teeth, but dares not bite,
And South Sea treasures are not brought to light;
When Churchmen Scripture for the Classics quit,
Polite apostates from God's grace to wit;
When men grow great from their revenue spent,
And fly from bailiffs into parliament:
When dying sinners, to blot out their score,
Bequeath the church the leavings of a whore;
To chafe our spleen, when themes like these increase,
Shall panegyric reign, and censure cease?-----
Shall authors smile on such illustrious days,
And satirize with nothing---but their praise?

Sat. I.

VOL. I.

EMBELLISHED WITH SUPERB ENGRAVINGS.

London:

Printed for C. COOKE, No. 17, Paternoster-Row;
and sold by all the Bookfellers in
Great Britain and
Ireland.

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF THE
REV. DR. E. YOUNG.
CONTAINING
THE COMPLAINT:
OR,
NIGHT THOUGHTS
On Life, Death, and Immortality,
THE
FORCE OF RELIGION,
&c. &c. &c.

Sunt lacrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt. *Virg.*

Thro' many a field of moral and divine
The Muse has stray'd, and much of sorrow seen,----
O'er friends deceas'd full heartily she wept;
Of love divine the wonders she display'd;
Prov'd man immortal; shew'd the source of joy;
The grand tribunal rais'd; assign'd the bounds
Of human grief. In few, to close the whole,
The moral Muse has shadow'd out a sketch,
Tho' not in form, nor with a Raphael stroke,
Of most our weakness needs believe or do,
In this our land of travail and of hope,
For peace on earth, or prospect of the skies.

Night IX.

London:
PRINTED AND EMBELLISHED
Under the Direction of
C. COOKE.

THE
HISTORICAL RECORDS

OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

FROM 1776 TO 1876

IN
TEN VOLUMES

BY
JAMES M. SMITH

NEW YORK
1876

THE
HISTORICAL RECORDS

OF THE
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IN
TEN VOLUMES

LIFE OF DR. YOUNG.

EDWARD YOUNG was born at Upham near Winchester, in June 1681. His father, Dr. Edward Young, at that time fellow of Winchester College, was collated in 1682, to a prebend in the collegiate church of Sarum, and afterwards appointed chaplain to King William and Queen Mary, and preferred to the deanery of the said church; he died at Sarum in 1705, and justice was done to his memory in a funeral sermon by Bishop Burnet.

Our author remained on the foundation at Winchester college, where he had been placed by his father till the election, after he had attained to his eighteenth year, when he removed to New College, Oxford, and pursued his studies with great assiduity. In 1708 he was nominated to a law fellowship at All Souls by Archbishop Tennison, whose patronage justifies Bishop Burnet's character of the father, and reflects honour on the conduct of the son.

He soon discovered a prevailing passion for wealth and honours; to attain which, he pursued the beaten track of courting the favour of the titled and the opulent. His first poetical flight was in 1712, when Queen Anne created in one day no less than ten peers. In order to reconcile the people to one at least of the new lords, he published "An Epistle to the Right Honourable George Lord Lansdowne," from whom he expected patronage. It was observed, by one of his contemporaries, that 'in this composition the poet points out his panegyric with the extravagance of a young man, who thinks his present stock of wealth will never be exhausted.'

On the appearance of Addison's *Cato*, in 1713, Young prefixed to it a copy of recommendatory verses, and the same year published his *Last Day*, a poem, in the composition of which he seems, from the exordium, to have employed a considerable portion of time. It was inscribed to the Queen, in a dedication in which he tells her Majesty that 'his only title to the great honour he now does himself is the obligation he formerly received from her royal indulgence;' but of that obligation nothing is now known. Young is said to have been engaged at a settled stipend as a writer for the court, and to give colour to such a suspicion, the following lines have been quoted from Swift's *Rhapsody on Poetry*.

- ' Whence Gay was banish'd in disgrace,
- ' Where Pope will never show his face,
- ' Where Y—— must torture his invention,
- ' To flatter knaves, or lose his pension.

The poem, though written on a most solemn subject, is not without a glance at politics. The cry that the church was in danger, had not yet subsided, the *Last Day*, written by a lay man, was therefore approved by the ministry and their friends.

Soon after, he published '*The Force of Religion, or Vanquished Love.*' This poem is founded on the execution of Lady Jane, and her husband Lord Guildford Dudley in 1554—it was inscribed to the Countess of Salisbury, in language that surpasses the eulogium of dedication in general, and is highly characteristic of the author.

In April 1714, he took his degree of Bachelor of Civil Law, and the same year published a poem on the late queen's death, and the accession of George I. It was inscribed to Addison, then secretary to the lords justices.

In 1719, his tragedy of *Busiris* was brought on the stage, and received with applause; the same year the author took the degree of Doctor of Laws, and lamented the death of Addison in an epistle addressed to their common friend Tickel. Soon after appeared '*A Paraphrase on the Book of Job,*' a work which at once evinced the piety and learning of the author.

In 1721, his tragedy of *The Revenge* was performed, and met with very great success. It was dedicated to the Duke of Wharton, whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but the promoter of his future fortune.

His satires were originally published separately under the title of *The Love of Fame, or The Universal Passion.* The first appeared in 1725, the last was finished in the beginning of the year 1726. The fifth Satire on Women, was not published till 1727, and the sixth not till 1728.

In 1726, he addressed a poem to Sir Robert Walpole, which the title, *The Instalment*, sufficiently explains, and at the accession of George II. he published *Ocean*, an *Ode*, prefixed to which were an *Ode to the King*, *Pater Patriæ*, and *An Essay on Lyric Poetry.*

About this time, when he was almost fifty, he entered into orders, and was soon after appointed chaplain to the king. The tragedy of *The Brothers* he immediately withdrew from the stage as unbecoming his new profession.

Soon after he assumed the gown, he published in prose *A True Estimate of Human Life*, dedicated to the Queen, and a sermon preached before the House of Commons, January 30th, 1729, on the Martyrdom of King Charles, entitled *An Apology for Princes, or The Reverence due to Government.*

In

In 1730, he published *Imperium Pelagi*, a *Naval Lyric*, in imitation of *Pindar's Spirit*. The design was to compliment his majesty on his return from Hanover, and the succeeding peace. Soon after this sublime attempt, appeared two Epistles to Pope concerning *the Authors of the Age*.

In July 30 of the same year, he was presented by All Souls College, of which he was a member, to the rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordshire; and in April 1732, married Lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the Earl of Leicester, and widow of Colonel Lee, an officer of rank and valour.

His next publication was the *Sea Piece* in two Odes, with a poetical dedication to Voltaire, whom he had seen when he was in England, at the seat of Mr. Doddington in Dorsetshire, which Thomson, in his *Autumn*, calls the seat of the muses;

‘Where in the secret bower and winding walk

‘For virtuous Young and thee they twine the bays.’

In 1740, he lost his wife, who was soon followed to the grave by an amiable daughter, the child of her former husband. She had been lately married to Mr. Temple, son of Lord Palmerston. Mr. Temple did not long survive his wife. How suddenly their deaths happened, and how nearly together, no one who has read the *Night Thoughts* need be informed.

Insatiate Archer! could not one suffice?

Thy shaft flew thrice, and thrice my peace was slain,

And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.

To the sorrow Young felt at these losses, we are indebted for these poems. There is a pleasure in sadness which mourners only know.—By these extraordinary poems, written after he was sixty, it was the desire of Young principally to be known. He entitled the four volumes which he published—‘The works of the Author of the *Night Thoughts*.’

In 1753, the tragedy of *The Brothers* was at length performed at Drury-Lane; the profits accruing to him from which, as the author, he designed as a gift to the society for the propagation of the Gospel. He had calculated the amount at a thousand pounds; but being deceived in his expectation, through the indifferent reception of the piece, he made up the sum deficient out of his own purse, a circumstance which, though it failed to increase his reputation as a poet, did him the highest honour as a man.

His

His next publication was *The Centaur not Fabulous*, in six letters to a friend on the life in vogue. In the third letter is described the death-bed of the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched *Altamont*. His last words were—'My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my kindness has murdered my wife.'

In 1762, Young published his last work, *Resignation*. It was printed by Richardson (author of *Pamela*, and other sentimental novels) who died suddenly during the impression of the first edition. He laments him as a friend, and has given some sketches of his genius.

To teach our passions secret springs
Was his peculiar care,
And deep his genius div'd
In bosoms of the fair.

Nature which favours to the few,
All art beyond imparts,
To him presented at his birth,
The key of human hearts.

To *Resignation* was prefixed an apology for its appearance, to which more credit is due than to the generality of such apologies, from the author's unusual anxiety that no more productions of his old age should disgrace his former fame. From this time the infirmities of old age rendered him incapable of performing any duty, and he resigned himself to the direction of his house-keeper, whose ascendancy in his family is ridiculed with more ill-nature than wit, in a novel by Kidgell, in 1755, called *THE CARD*, under the names of Dr. Elwes and Mrs. Trusty. Kidgell had been Young's curate. Dr. Young departed this life on the 5th day of April 1765, and a monument was erected to his memory in Welwyn Church with a concise and modest inscription.

Of the private habits and domestic manners of Young, curiosity may require more ample information than is to be found in the few scattered notices which the diligence of his biographers have collected, or the zeal and veneration of his friends have supplied.

Singularity seems to have predominated over his most juvenile practices. Dr. Ridley mentions a report current at Oxford, that when he was composing, he would shut his windows, and sit by a lamp even at mid-day, and that skulls, bones, and instruments of death were among the ornaments of his study. He indulged an early luxury in de-
scribing

scribing the miseries of a world that did not immediately forward his designs and gratify his expectation. It has been said, that if he had been a bishop, he would never have written the Night Thoughts.

Dr. Young, as a man, no doubt partook of the foibles incidental to human nature. His leading passions seem to have been ambition and avarice, from which it has been deemed very singular, that though he most diligently sought he never obtained any preferment in the church, except that which he procured from the college of which he was a member, without any favour. One obstacle seems to have been his invariable attachment to politics, by which if he gained some friends he made many enemies.

He was strictly attentive to the duties of religion, and read prayers every morning and night to his family when there was no public service. He was moderate in his meals, and rarely drank wine except when he was ill, being (as he said) unwilling to waste the succours of sickness in the stability of health. He lived at a moderate expence, rather inclining to parsimony than profusion, insomuch that he expended annually little more than half his income.

As a divine he was highly esteemed, being a very popular preacher, much followed for the graces and animation of his delivery. Yet his oratorical powers did not always produce the desired effect, for one Sunday, preaching officially at St. James's, though he strove to fix the attention of his audience, he could not prevail. This so affected his feelings, that he sat back in the pulpit, and burst into tears.

The writings of Young may be distinctly considered as comprising essays, plays, and poems. As an essayist, his *Centaur not Fabulous*, and his letters on original composition, are his most considerable productions. Of the former it may truly be said, that it has a powerful tendency to promote the cause of religion and virtue. Of the latter, that though the style is sometimes affected and hyperbolical, the sentiments are bold, penetrating and sublime. As a dramatist, he has been successful in imitating the beauties of art, with the energies of natural fire and spirit. None of his productions are in possession of the stage except *The Revenge*. Though the diction and sentiment of this tragedy are upon the whole animated, brilliant, and classical, though they paint in glowing language, the fury of rage and revenge, and the agonies of jealousy, love, and despair; yet it must be confessed, that, with many and great beauties, are interspersed puerile cant, fustian and bombast.

With respect to his poetical productions, it may be said of Young, as Addison said of Lee, that they possess true
poetic

poetic fire, though clouded and obscured by thick volumes of smoke. But he has merit of the highest kind, for it is universally acknowledged that he is an original though unequal writer. His defects and beauties are alike his own. Of the epigrammatic tenor of his satires there is no example, nor was he indebted to any poet, ancient or modern, for the plan of his *Night Thoughts*. The productions of Dr. Young have come under the critical examination of Dr. Wharton, Dr. Blair, Mr. Boswell, and Dr. Johnson. They have pointed out severally their beauties and defects, according to their respective opinions, and upon the whole agree with Dr. Johnson, who concludes his remarks upon the literary merit of our author, pronouncing him a man of genius and a poet.



VERSES TO THE AUTHOR.

NOW let the Atheist tremble, thou alone
Canst bid his conscious heart the Godhead own,
Whom shalt thou not reform? O thou hast seen
How God descends to judge the souls of men.
Thou heard'st the sentence how the guilty mourn, 5
Driv'n out from God, and never to return.

Yet more, behold ten thousand thunders fall,
And sudden vengeance wrap the flaming ball.
When Nature sunk, when ev'ry bolt was hurl'd,
Thou saw'st the boundless ruins of the world. 10

When guilty Sodom felt the burning rain,
And sulphur fell on the devoted plain,
The Patriarch thus the fiery tempest past,
With pious horror view'd the desert waste;
The restless smoke still wav'd its curls around, 15
For ever rising from the glowing ground.

But tell me, oh! what heav'nly pleasure, tell,
To think so greatly, and describe so well!
How wast thou pleas'd the wondrous theme to try,
And find the thought of man could rise so high? 20
Beyond this world the labour to pursue,
And open all eternity to view?

But thou art best delighted to rehearse
Heaven's holy dictates in exalted verse.
O thou hast power the harden'd heart to warm, 25
To grieve, to raise, to terrify, to charm;
To fix the soul on God; to teach the mind
To know the dignity of humankind;
By stricter rules well-govern'd life to scan,
And practise o'er the angel in the man. 30

TO A LADY,

WITH THE LAST DAY.

MADAM,

HERE sacred truths, in lofty numbers told,
 The prospect of a future state unfold ;
 The realms of night to mortal view display,
 And the glad regions of eternal day.
 This daring author scorns, by vulgar ways
 Of guilty wit, to merit worthless praise. 5
 Full of her glorious theme, his tow'ring Muse,
 With gen'rous zeal a nobler fame pursues :
 Religion's cause her ravish'd heart inspires,
 And with a thousand bright ideas fires ; 10
 Transports her quick, impatient, piercing eye,
 O'er the strait limits of mortality
 To boundless orbs, and bids her fearless soar,
 Where only Milton gain'd renown before ;
 Where various scenes alternately excite 15
 Amazement, pity, terror, and delight.

Thus did the Muses sing in early times,
 Ere skill'd to flatter vice, and varnish crimes :
 Their lyres were tun'd to virtuous songs alone,
 And the chaste poet and the priest were one : 20
 But now, forgetful of their infant state
 They sooth the wanton pleasures of the great ;
 And from the press, and the licentious stage,
 With luscious poison taint the thoughtless age :
 Deceitful charms attract our wond'ring eyes, 25
 And specious ruin unsuspected lies.
 So the rich soil of India's blooming shores,
 Adorn'd with lavish Nature's choicest stores,
 Where serpents lurk, by flow'rs conceal'd from sight;
 Hides fatal danger under gay delight. 30

These purer thoughts from gross alloys refin'd,
 With heavenly raptures elevate the mind :
 Not fram'd to raise a giddy, short-liv'd joy,
 Whose false allurements, while they please, destroy ;

But bliss resembling that of saints above,
 Sprung from the vision of th' Almighty Love:
 Firm, solid bliss, for ever great and new,
 The more 'tis known, the more admir'd, like you;
 Like you, fair nymph! in whom united meet
 Endearing sweetness, unaffected wit, 40
 And all the glories of your sparkling race,
 While inward virtues heighten ev'ry grace.
 By these secur'd, you will with pleasure read
 Of future judgment, and the rising dead;
 Of time's grand period, heaven and earth o'erthrown;
 And gasping Nature's last tremendous groan. 46
 These when the stars and sun shall be no more,
 Shall beauty to your ravish'd form restore:
 Then shall you shine with an immortal ray,
 Improv'd by death, and brighten'd by decay. 50

Pemb. Col.
 Oxon.

T. TRISTRAM.



B

TO THE AUTHOR,

On his Last Day, and Universal Passion.

AND must it be as thou hast sung,
 Celestial Bard, seraphic Young!
 Will there no trace, no point be found
 Of all this spacious glorious round?
 Yon lamps of light must they decay?
 On Nature's self Destruction prey?
 Then fame, the most immortal thing
 E'en thou canst hope, is on the wing.
 Shall Newton's system be admir'd
 When time and motion are expir'd?
 Shall souls be curious to explore
 Who rul'd an orb that is no more?
 Or shall they quote the pictur'd age,
 From Pope's and thy corrective page,
 When vice and virtue lose their name
 In deathless joy or endless shame?
 While wears away the grand machine,
 The works of genius shall be seen:
 Beyond, what laurels can there be
 For Homer, Horace, Pope, or thee?
 Thro' life we chase, with fond pursuit,
 What mocks our hope, like Sodom's fruit;
 And, sure, thy plan was well design'd
 To cure this madness of the mind;
 First beyond time our thoughts to raise,
 Then lash our love of transient praise;
 In both we own thy doctrine just,
 And fame's a breath, and men are dust.

5

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15

20

25

28

1736.

J. BANCKS.



THE COMPLAINT.

PREFACE.

AS the occasion of this poem was real, not fictitious, so the method pursued in it was rather imposed by what spontaneously arose in the author's mind on that occasion, than meditated or designed; which will appear very probable from the nature of it; for it differs from the common mode of poetry, which is, from long narrations to draw short morals; here, on the contrary, the narrative is short, and the morality arising from it makes the bulk of the poem. The reason of it is, that the facts mentioned did naturally pour these moral reflections on the thought of the writer.

NIGHT I.

ON LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

Humbly inscribed to the

RIGHT HON. ARTHUR ONSLOW,

Speaker of the House of Commons.

TIR'D Nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep!
He, like the world, his ready visit pays
Where Fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes:
Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
And lights on lids unfully'd with a tear. 5

From short (as usual) and disturb'd repose
I wake: how happy they who wake no more!
Yet that were vain, if dreams infest the grave.
I wake, emerging from a sea of dreams
Tumultuous; where my wreck'd desponding thought
From wave to wave of fancy'd misery 11
At random drove, her helm of reason lost.
Though now restor'd, 'tis only change of pain,
(A bitter change) severer for severe:
The day too short for my distress; and night, 15
E'en in the zenith of her dark domain,
Is sunshine to the colour of my fate.

Night, fable goddess, from her ebon throne,

In rayless majesty, now stretches forth
 Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumb'ring world. 20
 Silence how dead ! and darkness how profound !
 Nor eye nor list'ning ear an object finds ;
 Creation sleeps. 'Tis as the gen'ral pulse
 Of life stood still, and nature made a pause ;
 An awful pause ! prophetic of her end. 25
 And let her prophecy be soon fulfill'd :
 Fate ! drop the curtain ; I can lose no more.

Silence and Darkness ! solemn sisters ! twins
 From ancient Night, who nurse the tender thought !
 To reason, and on reason build resolve, 30
 (That column of true majesty in man)
 Assist me : I will thank you in the grave ;
 The grave your kingdom : there this frame shall fall
 A victim sacred to your dreary shrine.
 But what are ye ?— 35

Thou who didst put to flight
 Primeval Silence, when the morning stars,
 Exulting, shouted o'er the rising ball ;
 O Thou ! whose word from solid darkness struck
 That spark, the sun, strike wisdom from my soul ; 40
 My soul, which flies to thee, her trust, her treasure,
 As misers to their gold, while others rest.

Through this opaque of nature and of soul,
 This double night, transmit one pitying ray,
 To lighten and to cheer. O lead my mind, 45
 (A mind that fain would wander from its woe)
 Lead it through various scenes of life and death,
 And from each scene the noblest truths inspire.
 Nor less inspire my conduct than my song ;
 Teach my best reason reason ; my best will 50
 Teach rectitude ; and fix my firm resolve
 Wisdom to wed, and pay her long arrear :
 Nor let the phial of thy vengeance, pour'd
 On this devoted head, be pour'd in vain.

The bell strikes one. We take no note of time, 55
 But from its loss. To give it then a tongue
 Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke
 I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,

It is the knell of my departed hours.

Where are they ? With the years beyond the flood. 60

It is the signal that demands dispatch :

How much is to be done ? My hopes and fears

Start up alarm'd, and o'er life's narrow verge

Look down—on what ? a fathomless abyfs.

A dread eternity ! how surely mine ! 65

And can eternity belong to me,

Poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour ?

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,

How complicate, how wonderful, is man !

How passing wonder He who made him such ! 70

Who centred in our make such strange extremes

From diff'rent natures marvellously mix'd,

Connexion exquisite of distant worlds !

Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain !

Midway from nothing to the Deity ! 75

A beam etherial, fully'd and absorb'd !

Though fully'd and dishonour'd, still divine !

Dim miniature of greatness absolute !

An heir of glory ! a frail child of dust !

Helpless immortal ! insect infinite ! 80

A worm ! a god !—I tremble at myself,

And in myself am lost. At home a stranger,

Thought wanders up and down, surpris'd, aghast,

And wond'ring at her own. How reason reels !

O what a miracle, to man, is man, 85

Triumphantly distress'd ! what joy ! what dread !

Alternately transported and alarmed !

What can preserve my life ! or what destroy !

An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave :

Legions of angels can't confine me there. 90

'Tis past conjecture ; all things rise in proof.

While o'er my limbs Sleep's soft dominion spread,

What though my soul fantastic measures trod

O'er fairy fields, or mourn'd along the gloom

Of pathless woods, or down the craggy steep 95

Hurl'd headlong, swam with pain the mantled pool,

Or scal'd the cliff, or danc'd on hollow winds,

With antic shapes, wild natives of the brain ?

Her ceaseless flight, though devious, speaks her nature
Of subtler essence than the trodden clod, 100

Active, aerial, tow'ring unconfin'd,
Unfetter'd with her gross companion's fall.

E'en silent night proclaims my soul immortal;
E'en silent night proclaims eternal day.

For human weal heaven husbands all events : 105
Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain.

Why then their loss deplore that are not lost ?
Why wanders wretched Thought their tombs around
In infidel distress ? Are angels there ?

Slumbers, rak'd up in dust, etherial fire ? 110

They live ! they greatly live a life on earth
Unkindled, unconceiv'd, and from an eye
Of tenderness let heavenly pity fall
On me, more justly number'd with the dead.

This is the desert, this the solitude : 115

How populous, how vital is the grave !

This is Creation's melancholy vault,

The vale funereal, the sad cypress gloom ;

The land of apparitions, empty shades !

All, all on earth is shadow, all beyond 120

Is substance ; the reverse is Folly's creed.

How solid all, where change shall be no more ?

This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,

The twilight of our day, the vestibule.

Life's theatre as yet is shut, and Death, 125

Strong Death, alone can heave the massy bar,

This gross impediment of clay remove,

And make us, embryos of existence, free.

From real life but little more remote

Is he, not yet a candidate for light, 130

The future embryo, slumb'ring in his fire.

Embryos we must be till we burst the shell,

Yon' ambient azure shell, and spring to life,

The life of gods, O transport ! and of man.

Yet man, fool man ! here buries all his thoughts, 135

Inters celestial hopes without one sigh.

Pris'ner of earth, and pent beneath the moon,

Here pinions all his wishes ; wing'd by heaven

To fly at infinite, and reach it there,
 Where seraphs gather immortality, 140
 On Life's fair tree, fast by the throne of God.
 What golden joys ambrosial clust'ring glow
 In his full beam, and ripen for the just,
 Where momentary ages are no more!
 Where Time, and Pain, and Chance, and Death expire!
 And is it in the flight of threescore years 146
 To push eternity from human thought,
 And smother souls immortal in the dust?
 A soul immortal, spending all her fires,
 Wasting her strength in strenuous idleness, 150
 Thrown into tumult, raptur'd or alarm'd,
 At aught this scene can threaten or indulge,
 Resembles ocean into tempest wrought,
 To waft a feather, or to drown a fly.
 Where falls this censure? It o'erwhelms myself.
 How was my heart incrust'd by the world! 156
 O how self-fetter'd was my grov'ling soul!
 How, like a worm, was I wrapt round and round
 In filken thought, which reptile Fancy spun,
 Till darken'd Reason lay quite clouded o'er, 160
 With soft conceit of endless comfort here,
 Nor yet put forth her wings to reach the skies!
 Night-visions may befriend (as sung above:)
 Our waking dreams are fatal. How I dream'd
 Of things impossible! (could sleep do more?) 165
 Of joys perpetual in perpetual change!
 Of stable pleasures on the tossing wave!
 Eternal sunshine in the storms of life!
 How richly were my noontide trances hung
 With gorgeous tapestries of pictur'd joys! 170
 Joy behind joy, in endless perspective!
 Till at Death's toll, whose restless iron tongue
 Calls daily for his millions at a meal,
 Starting I woke, and found myself undone.
 Where now my frenzy's pompous furniture? 175
 The cobweb'd cottage, with its ragged wall
 Of mould'ring mud, is royalty to me!
 The spider's most attenuated thread

Is cord, is cable, to man's tender tie
On earthly bliss : it breaks at ev'ry breeze. 180

O ye blest scenes of permanent delight !
Full above measure ! lasting beyond bound !
A perpetuity of bliss is bliss.
Could you, so rich in rapture, fear an end,
That ghastly thought would drink up all your joy,
And quite unparadise the realms of light. 186

Safe are you lodg'd above these rolling spheres,
The baleful influence of whose giddy dance
Sheds sad vicissitude on all beneath.
Here teems with revolutions ev'ry hour, 190
And rarely for the better ; or the best
More mortal than the common births of Fate.

Each moment has its sickle, emulous
Of Time's enormous scythe, whose ample sweep
Strikes empires from the root : each moment plays
His little weapon in the narrower sphere 196
Of sweet domestic comfort, and cuts down
The fairest bloom of sublunary bliss.

Bliss ! sublunary bliss ! proud words, and vain !
Implicit treason to divine decree ! 200

A bold invasion of the rights of heaven !
I clasp'd the phantoms, and I found them air.
O had I weigh'd it ere my fond embrace,
What darts of agony had miss'd my heart !

Death ! great proprietor of all ! 'tis thine 205
To tread out empire, and to quench the stars.
The sun himself by thy permission shines,
And one day thou shalt pluck him from his sphere :
Amid such mighty plunder, why exhaust
Thy partial quiver on a mark so mean ? 210

Why thy peculiar rancour wreak'd on me ?
Insatiate archer ! could not one suffice ?
Thy shaft flew thrice, and thrice my peace was slain ;
And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.
O Cynthia ! why so pale ? dost thou lament 215
Thy wretched neighbour ? grieve to see thy wheel
Of ceaseless change outwhirl'd in human life ?
How wanes my borrow'd bliss ! from Fortune's smile,

Precarious courtesy ! not virtue's sure,
Self-given, solar ray of sound delight.

220

In ev'ry vary'd posture, place, and hour,
How widow'd ev'ry thought of ev'ry joy !
Thought, busy thought, too busy for my peace !
Through the dark postern of time long elaps'd,
Led softly, by the stillness of the night,
Led, like a murderer, (and such it proves)
Strays, (wretched rover !) o'er the pleasing past ;
In quest of wretchedness perversely strays,
And finds all desert now ; and meets the ghosts
Of my departed joys, a num'rous train !
I rue the riches of my former fate ;
Sweet comfort's blasted clusters I lament ;
I tremble at the blessings once so dear,
And ev'ry pleasure pains me to the heart.

225

230

Yet why complain ? or why complain for one ?
Hangs out the sun his lustre but for me,
The single man ? are angels all beside ?
I mourn for millions : 'tis the common lot :
In this shape or in that has Fate entail'd
The mother's throes on all of woman born,
Not more the children than sure heirs of pain.

240

War, famine, pest, volcano, storm, and fire,
Intestine broils, Oppression, with her heart
Wrapt up in triple brass, besiege mankind.
God's image, disinherited of day,
Here plung'd in mines, forgets a sun was made :
There beings, deathless as their haughty lord,
Are hammer'd to the galling oar for life,
And plough the winter's wave, and reap despair.
Some for hard masters, broken under arms,
In battle lopp'd away, with half their limbs,
Beg bitter bread through realms their valour sav'd,
If so the tyrant or his minion doom.
Want and incurable disease, (fell pair !)
On hopeless multitudes remorseless seize
At once, and make a refuge of the grave.
How groaning hospitals eject their dead !
What numbers groan for sad admission there !

245

250

255

What numbers, once in Fortune's lap high-fed,
Solicit the cold hand of Charity? 260

To shock us more, solicit it in vain!
Ye silken sons of Pleasure! since in pains
You rue more modish visits, visit here,
And breathe from your debauch: give, and reduce
Surfeit's dominion o'er you. But so great 265
Your impudence, you blush at what is right.

Happy did sorrow seize on such alone.
Not prudence can defend, or virtue save.
Disease invades the chastest temperance,
And punishment the guiltless; and alarm 270
Through thickest shades pursues the fond of peace.
Man's caution often into danger turns,
And, his guard falling, crushes him to death.
Not Happiness itself makes good her name;
Our very wishes give us not our wish. 275

How distant oft the thing we doat on most
From that for which we doat, felicity?
The smoothest course of Nature has its pains,
And truest friends, thro' error, wound our rest.
Without misfortune what calamities! 280
And what hostilities without a foe!
Nor are foes wanting to the best on earth.
But endless is the list of human ills,
And sighs might sooner fail than cause to sigh.

A part how small of the terraqueous globe 285
Is tenanted by man? the rest a waste,
Rocks, desarts, frozen seas, and burning sands!
Wild haunts of monsters, poison, stings, and death.
Such is earth's melancholy map! but, far
More sad! this earth is a true map of man: 290
So bounded are its haughty lord's delights
To Woe's wide empire, where deep troubles tofs,
Loud sorrows howl, envenom'd passions bite,
Rav'nous calamities our vitals seize,
And threat'ning Fate wide opens to devour. 295

What then am I, who sorrow for myself?
In age, in infancy, from others' aid
Is all our hope: to teach us to be kind;

That Nature's first, last lesson to mankind.
The selfish heart deserves the pain it feels. 300
More gen'rous sorrow, while it sinks, exalts ;
And conscious virtue mitigates the pang.
Nor virtue more than prudence bids me give
Swoln thought a second channel : who divide,
They weaken, too, the torrent of their grief. 305
Take, then, O world ! thy much indebted tear.
How sad a sight is human happiness
To those whose thought can pierce beyond an hour !
O thou, whate'er thou art, whose heart exults !
Wouldst thou I should congratulate thy fate ! 310
I know thou wouldst, thy pride demands it from me :
Let thy pride pardon what thy nature needs,
The salutary censure of a friend.
Thou happy wretch ! by blindness thou art blest'd ;
By dotage dandled to perpetual smiles. 315
Know, Smiler, at thy peril art thou pleas'd !
Thy pleasure is the promise of thy pain.
Misfortune, like a creditor severe,
But rises in demand for her delay ;
She makes a scourge of past prosperity, 320
To sting thee more, and double thy distress.
Lorenzo ! Fortune makes her court to thee :
Thy fond heart dances while the Syren sings.
Dear is thy welfare : think me not unkind ;
I would not damp, but to secure thy joys. 325
Think not that fear is sacred to the storm.
Stand on thy guard against the smiles of Fate.
Is heaven tremendous in its frowns ? Most sure ;
And in its favours formidable too :
Its favours here are trials, not rewards ; 330
A call to duty, not discharge from care ;
And should alarm us full as much as woes ;
Awake us to their cause and consequence ;
And make us tremble, weigh'd with our desert ;
Awe Nature's tumult, and chastise her joys, 335
Lest, while we clasp, we kill them ; nay, invert
To worse than simple misery their charms.
Revolted joys, like foes in civil war,

Like bosom friendships to resentment sour'd,
 With rage envenom'd rise against our peace. 340
 Beware what earth calls happiness ; beware
 All joys but joys that never can expire.

Who builds on less than an immortal base,
 Fond as he seems, condemns his joys to death.

Mine died with thee, Philander, thy last sigh 345
 Dissolv'd the charm ; the disenchant'd earth
 Lost all her lustre. Where her glitt'ring tow'rs ?
 Her golden mountains where ? all darken'd down
 To naked waste ; a dreary vale of tears.

The great magician's dead ! Thou poor pale piece
 Of outcast earth, in darkness ! what a change 351
 From yesterday ! Thy darling hope so near,
 (Long-labour'd prize !) O how ambition flush'd
 Thy glowing cheek ! ambition truly great,
 Of virtuous praise. Death's subtle seed within, 355

(Sly, treach'rous miner !) working in the dark,
 Smil'd at thy well-concerted scheme, and beckon'd
 The worm to riot on that rose so red,
 Unfaded ere it fell ; one moment's prey !

Man's foresight is conditionally wise. 360
 Lorenzo ! wisdom into folly turns,
 Oft the first instant its idea fair
 To labouring thought is born. How dim our eye !
 The present moment terminates our sight ;
 Clouds, thick as those on doomsday, drown the next :
 We penetrate, we prophecy in vain. 366

Time is dealt out by particles, and each
 Are mingled with the streaming sands of life.
 By Fate's inviolable oath is sworn
 Deep silence, " where eternity begins." 370

By Nature's law, what may be, may be now ;
 There's no prerogative in human hours.
 In human hearts what bolder thought can rise
 That man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn ?
 Where is to-morrow ? In another world. 375
 For numbers this is certain ; the reverse
 Is sure to none ; and yet, on this *perhaps*,
 This *peradventure*, infamous for lies,

As on a rock of adamant, we build
Our mountain hopes, spin out eternal schemes, 380
As we the Fatal Sisters could outspin,
And, big with life's futurities, expire.

Not e'en Philander had bespoke his shroud ;
Nor had he cause ; a warning was deny'd.
How many fall as sudden, not as safe ! 385

As sudden, though for years admonish'd home.
Of human ills the last extreme beware ;
Beware, Lorenzo, a slow sudden death.
How dreadful that deliberate surprise !
Be wise to-day ; 'tis madness to defer ; 390
Next day the fatal precedent will plead :
Thus on, 'till wisdom is push'd out of life.

Procrastination is the thief of time ;
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves 395
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.
If not so frequent, would not this be strange ?
That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still.

Of man's miraculous mistakes this bears
The palm, " That all men are about to live," 400
For ever on the brink of being born.

All pay themselves the compliment to think
They one day shall not drivel, and their pride
On this reversion takes up ready praise ;
At least their own ; their future selves applaud. 405
How excellent that life they ne'er will lead !

Time lodg'd in their own hands is Folly's vails ;
That lodg'd in Fate's to Wisdom they consign ;
The thing they can't but purpose they postpone.
'Tis not in folly not to scorn a fool, 410
And scarce in human wisdom to do more.

All promise is poor dilatory man,
And that thro' ev'ry stage. When young, indeed,
In full content we sometimes nobly rest,
Unanxious for ourselves, and only wish, 415
As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise.
At thirty man suspects himself a fool ;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan ;

At fifty chides his infamous delay,
 Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve; 420
 In all the magnanimity of thought
 Resolves, and re-resolves; then dies the same.

And why? because he thinks himself immortal.
 All men think all men mortal but themselves;
 Themselves, when some alarming shock of fate 425
 Strikes thro' their wounded hearts the sudden dread;
 But their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,
 Soon close; where past the shaft no trace is found.
 As from the wing no scar the sky retains,
 The parted wave no furrow from the keel, 430
 So dies in human hearts the thought of death.
 E'en with the tender tear which Nature sheds
 O'er those we love, we drop it in their grave.
 Can I forget Philander? that were strange!
 O my full heart!—But should I give it vent, 435
 The longest night, tho' longer far, would fail,
 And the lark listen to my midnight song.

The sprightly lark's shrill matin wakes the morn;
 Grief's sharpest thorn hard pressing on my breast,
 I strive, with wakeful melody, to cheer 440
 The fullen gloom, sweet Philomel! like thee,
 And call the stars to listen: ev'ry star
 Is deaf to mine, enamour'd of thy lay.
 Yet be not vain; there are who thine excel,
 And charm thro' distant ages. Wrapt in shade, 445
 Pris'ner of darkness! to the silent hours
 How often I repeat their rage divine,
 To lull my griefs, and steal my heart from woe!
 I roll their raptures, but not catch their fire.
 Dark, tho' not blind, like thee, Mæonides! 450
 Or, Milton! thee. Ah, could I reach your strain!
 Or his who made Mæonides our own.
 Man, too, he sung: immortal man I sing:
 Oft bursts my song beyond the bounds of life:
 What now but immortality can please? 455
 O had he press'd his theme, pursu'd the track
 Which opens out of darkness into day!
 O had he mounted on his wing of fire,

Soar'd where I sink, and fung immortal man,
How had it blest, mankind and rescu'd me!

THE COMPLAINT.

NIGHT II.

ON TIME, DEATH, AND FRIENDSHIP.

Humbly inscribed to the

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF WILMINGTON.

“**W**HEN the cock crew he wept,”—smote by
that eye
Which looks on me, on all; that pow'r who bids
This midnight sentinel, with clarion shrill,
Emblem of that which shall awake the dead,
Rouse souls from slumber into thoughts of heaven. 5
Shall I too weep? where then is fortitude?
And, fortitude abandon'd, where is man?
I know the terms on which he sees the light:
He that is born is lifted: life is war;
Eternal war with woe: who bears it best 10
Deserves it least.—On other themes I'll dwell.
Lorenzo! let me turn my thoughts on thee
And thine; on themes may profit; profit there
Where most they need. Themes, too, the genuine growth
Of dear Philander's dust. He thus, tho' dead, 15
May still befriend.—What themes? Time's wondrous
Death, friendship, and Philander's final scene. [price,
So could I touch these themes as might obtain
Thine ear, nor leave thy heart quite disengag'd,
The good deed would delight me; half impress 20
On my dark cloud an Iris, and from grief
Call glory.—Dost thou mourn Philander's fate?
I know thou say'st it: says thy life the same?
He mourns the dead, who lives as they desire.
Where is that thirst, that avarice of time, 25
(O glorious avarice!) thought of death inspires,
As rumour'd robberies endear our gold?
O Time! than gold more sacred; more a load
Than lead to fools, and fools reputed wise.

What moment granted man without account ? 30
 What years are squander'd, wisdom's debt unpaid ?
 Our wealth in days all due to that discharge.
 Haste, haste, he lies in wait, he's at the door.
 Insidious Death ! should his strong hand arrest,
 No composition sets the pris'ner free. 35

Eternity's inexorable chain
 Fast binds, and vengeance claims the full arrear.

How late I shudder'd on the brink ! how late
 Life call'd for her last refuge in despair !
 That time is mine, O Mead ! to thee I owe ; 40
 Fain would I pay thee with eternity.
 But ill my genius answers my desire :
 My sickly song is mortal, past thy cure.
 Accept the will ;—that dies not with my strain.
 For what calls thy disease, Lorenzo ? not 45
 For Esculapian, but for moral aid.

Thou think'st it folly to be wise too soon.
 Youth is not rich in time ; it may be poor ;
 Part with it as with money, sparing ; pay
 No moment, but in purchase of its worth ; 50
 And what its worth ask deathbeds ; they can tell.
 Part with it, as with life, reluctant ; big
 With holy hope of nobler time to come ;
 Time higher aim'd, still nearer the great mark
 Of men and angels, virtue more divine. 55

Is this our duty, wisdom, glory, gain ?
 (These heaven benign in vital union binds)
 And sport we like the natives of the bough,
 When vernal suns inspire ? Amusement reigns,
 Man's great demand : to trifle is to live : 60
 And is it then a trifle, too, to die ?

Thou say'st I preach, Lorenzo ! 'tis confess'd.
 What if, for once, I preach thee quite awake ?
 Who wants amusement in the flame of battle ?
 Is it not treason in the soul immortal, 65
 Her foes in arms, eternity the prize ?
 Will toys amuse when med'cines cannot cure ?
 When spirits ebb, when life's enchanting scenes
 Their lustre lose, and lessen in our sight,

THE COMPLAINT. NIGHT II.

As lands, and cities with their glitt'ring spires, 29
 To the poor shatter'd bark, by sudden storm 70
 Thrown off to sea, and soon to perish there;
 Will toys amuse? No; thrones will then be toys,
 And earth and skies seem dust upon the scale.
 Redeem we time?—Its loss we dearly buy, 75
 What pleads Lorenzo for his high-priz'd sports?
 He pleads time's num'rous blanks: he loudly pleads
 The straw-like trifles on life's common stream.
 From whom those blanks and trifles but from thee?
 No blank, no trifle, Nature made, or meant. 80
 Virtue, or purpos'd virtue, still be thine;
 This cancels thy complaint at once; this leaves
 In act no trifle, and no blank in time.
 This greatens, fills, immortalizes all;
 This, the blest art of turning all to gold; 85
 This the good heart's prerogative to raise
 A royal tribute from the poorest hours;
 Immense revenue! ev'ry moment pays,
 If nothing more than purpose in thy pow'r,
 Thy purpose firm is equal to the deed. 90
 Who does the best his circumstance allows,
 Does well, acts nobly; angels could no more.
 Our outward act, indeed, admits restraint:
 'Tis not in things o'er thought to domineer, [heaven.
 Guard well thy thought: our thoughts are heard in
 On all important time, thro' ev'ry age, 96
 Tho' much, and warm, the wise have urg'd, the man
 Is yet unborn, who duly weighs an hour.
 "I've lost a day,"—the prince who nobly cry'd,
 Had been an emperor without his crown. 100
 Of Rome? say, rather, lord of human race:
 He spoke as if deputed by mankind.
 So should all speak: so reason speaks in all:
 From the soft whispers of that God in man,
 Why fly to folly, why to frenzy fly, 105
 For rescue from the blessings we possess?
 Time the supreme!—Time is eternity;
 Pregnant with all eternity can give;
 Pregnant with all that makes archangels smile.

Who murders Time, he crushes in the birth 110
A pow'r ethereal, only not ador'd.

Ah ! how unjust to Nature and himself
Is thoughtless, thankless, inconsistent man !
Like children babbling nonsense in their sports,
We censure Nature for a span too short ; 115

That span too short we tax as tedious too ;
Torture invention, all expedients tire,
To lash the ling'ring moments into speed,
And whirl us (happy riddance !) from ourselves.

Art, brainless Art ! our furious charioteer, 120
(For Nature's voice unstifled would recal)

Drives headlong tow' rds the precipice of death ;
Death most our dread ; death thus more dreadful made.
O what a riddle of absurdity !

Leisure is pain ; takes off our chariot-wheels : 125
How heavily we drag the load of life !

Blest leisure is our curse ; like that of Cain,
It makes us wander, wander earth around,
To fly that tyrant Thought. As Atlas groan'd
The world beneath, we groan beneath an hour : 130

We cry for mercy to the next amusement ;
The next amusement mortgages our fields ;
Slight inconvenience ! prisons hardly frown,
From hateful time if prisons set us free.

Yet when Death kindly tenders us relief, 135
We call him cruel ; years to moments shrink,

Ages to years. The telescope is turn'd :
To man's false optics (from his folly false)
Time, in advance, behind him hides his wings,
And seems to creep decrepit with his age. 140

Behold him when past by ; what then is seen
But his broad pinions swifter than the winds ?
And all mankind, in contradiction strong,
Rueful, aghast, cry out on his career.

Leave to thy foes these errors and these ills ; 145
To Nature just, their cause and cure explore.

Not short heaven's bounty, boundless our expence ;
No niggard Nature, men are prodigals.

We waste, not use our time ; we breathe, not live.



YOUNG'S POEMS.

Time in advance behind him hides his wings,
And seems to creep decrepit with his age.

Vide Complaint Vol. I. Night 2. Page 30. L. 138.

Drawn by R. Corbould, Engraved by J. Raimsbach, for C. Cooke Feb. 1. 1788.

Time wasted is existence, us'd is life ;
And bare existence man, to live ordain'd,
Wrings and oppresses with enormous weight.
And why ? since time was given for use, not waste,
Enjoin'd to fly, with tempest, tide, and stars,
To keep his speed, nor ever wait for man. 155

Time's use was doom'd a pleasure, waste a pain,
That man might feel his error if unseen,
And, feeling, fly to labour for his cure ;
Not blund'ring, split on idleness for ease. 159

Life's cares are comforts ; such by heaven design'd ;
He that has none must make them, or be wretched.

Cares are employments, and without employ,
The soul is on a rack ; the rack of rest ;
To souls most adverse ; action all their joy.

Here then the riddle mark'd above, unfolds ; 165

Then time turns torment, when man turns a fool.

We rave, we wrestle with great Nature's plan ;

We thwart the Deity ; and 'tis decreed,

Who thwart his will shall contradict their own.

Hence our unnat'ral quarrels with ourselves ; 170

Our thoughts at enmity ; our bosom-broil :

We push Time from us, and we wish him back ;

Lavish of lustrums, and yet fond of life ;

Life we think long and short ; death seek and shun :

Body and soul, like peevish man and wife, 175

United jar, and yet are loath to part.

Oh the dark days of vanity ! while here

How tasteless ! and how terrible when gone !

Gone ! they ne'er go ; when past they haunt us still :

The spirit walks of ev'ry day deceas'd, 180

And smiles an angel, or a fury frowns.

Nor death nor life delight us. If time past

And time possess both pain us, what can please ?

That which the Deity to please ordain'd,

Time us'd. The man who consecrates his hours 185

By vig'rous effort and an honest aim,

At once he draws the sting of life and death ;

He walks with Nature, and her paths are peace.

Our error's cause and cure are seen : see next

Time's nature, origin, importance, speed, 100
 And thy great gain from urging his career.
 All-sensual man, because untouch'd, unseen,
 He looks on time as nothing. Nothing else
 Is truly man's ; 'tis Fortune's. Time's a god.
 Hast thou ne'er heard of Time's omnipotence ? 195
 For, or against, what wonders he can do !
 And will : to stand blank neuter he disdains.
 Not on those terms was Time (heaven's stranger !) sent
 On his important embassy to man.
 Lorenzo ! no : on the long-destin'd hour, 200
 From everlasting ages growing ripe,
 That memorable hour of wondrous birth,
 When the Dread Sire, on emanation bent,
 And big with Nature, rising in his might,
 Call'd forth creation, (for then Time was born) 205
 By Godhead streaming thro' a thousand worlds ;
 Not on those terms, from the great days of heaven,
 From old Eternity's mysterious orb
 Was time cut off, and cast beneath the skies ;
 The skies, which watch him in his new abode, 210
 Measuring his motions by revolving spheres,
 That horologe machinery divine.
 Hours, days, and months, and years, his children play,
 Like num'rous wings, around him, as he flies ;
 Or rather, as unequal plumes, they shape 215
 His ample pinions, swift as darted flame,
 To gain his goal, to reach his ancient rest,
 And join anew Eternity his fire ;
 In his immutability to nest,
 When worlds, that count his circles now, unhing'd,
 (Fate the loud signal sounding) headlong rush 221
 To timeless night and chaos, whence they rose.
 Why spur the speedy ? why with levities
 New-wing thy short, short day's too rapid flight ?
 Know'st thou or what thou dost, or what is done ? 225
 Man flies from time, and time from man : too soon,
 In sad divorce this double flight must end ;
 And then where are we ? where, Lorenzo ! then
 Thy sports, thy pomps ? I grant thee in a state

Not unambitious ; in the ruffled shroud,
Thy Parian tomb's triumphant arch beneath.
Has Death his fopperies ? then well may Life
Put on her plume, and in her rainbow shine.

Ye well-array'd ! ye lilies of our land !
Ye lilies male ! who neither toil nor spin, 235
(As sister lilies might) if not so wise

As Solomon, more sumptuous to the sight !
Ye delicate ! who nothing can support,
Yourselfes most insupportable ! for whom
The winter rose must blow, the sun put on 240

A brighter beam in Leo ; silky-soft
Favonius breathe still softer, or be chid :
And other worlds send odours, fauce, and song,
And robes, and notions, fram'd in foreign looms !

O ye Lorenzos of our age ! who deem 245
One moment unamus'd a misery

Not made for feeble man ! who call aloud
For ev'ry bauble drivell'd o'er by sense ;
For rattles and conceits of ev'ry cast ;
For change of follies and relays of joy, 250

To drag your patient thro' the tedious length
Of a short winter's day——say, fages ! say,
Wit's oracles ! say, dreamers of gay dreams !
How will you weather an eternal night,
Where such expedients fail ? 255

O treach'rous Conscience ! while she seems to sleep
On rose and myrtle, lull'd with Syren song ;
While she seems, nodding o'er her charge, to drop
On headlong appetite the slacken'd rein,

And give us up to licence, unrecall'd, 260
Unmark'd ;—see, from behind her secret stand,
The sly informer minutes ev'ry fault,
And her dread diary with horror fills.

Not the gross act alone employs her pen ;
She reconnoitres Fancy's airy band. 265

A watchful foe ! the formidable spy
List'ning, o'erhears the whispers of our camp,
Our dawning purposes of heart explores,
And steals our embryos of iniquity.

As all-rapacious usurers conceal 270
Their doomday-book from all consuming heirs ;
Thus, with indulgence most severe, she treats
Us spendthrifts of inestimable time ;
Unnoted notes each moment misapply'd ;
In leaves more durable than leaves of brass 275
Writes our whole history, which Death shall read
In ev'ry pale delinquent's private ear,
And judgment publish ; publish to more worlds
Than this, and endless age in groans resound.
Lorenzo ! such that sleeper in thy breast ; 280
Such is her slumber ; and her vengeance such
For slighted counsel ; such thy future peace :
And think'st thou still thou canst be wise too soon ?
But why on time so lavish is my son ?
On this great theme kind nature keeps a school 385
To teach her sons herself. Each night we die ;
Each morn are born anew : each day a life !
And shall we kill each day ? If trifling kills,
Sure vice must butcher. O what heaps of slain
Cry out for vengeance on us ! Time destroy'd 290
Is suicide, where more than blood is spilt.
Time flies, death urges, knells call, heaven invites,
Hell threatens : all exerts ; in effort all,
More than creation, labours ! Labours more ?
And is there in creation what, amidst 295
This tumult universal, wing'd dispatch,
And ardent energy, supinely yawns ?——
Man sleeps, and man alone ; and man, whose fate,
Fate irreverfible, entire, extreme,
Endless, hair-hung, breeze-shaken, o'er the gulf 300
A moment trembles ; drops ! and man, for whom
All else is an alarm ; man, the sole cause
Of this furrounding storm ! and yet he sleeps,
As the storm rock'd to rest.—Throw years away ?
Throw empires, and be blameless. Moments seize, 305
Heaven's on their wing : a moment we may wish,
When worlds want wealth to buy. Bid Day stand still,
Bid him drive back his car, and reimport
The period past, regive the giv'n hour.

Lorenzo! more than miracles we want.

310

Lorenzo—O for yesterdays to come!

Such is the language of the man awake,
His ardour such for what oppresses thee.

And is his ardour vain, Lorenzo? No;

That more than miracle the gods indulge.

315

To-day is yesterday return'd; return'd

Full-pow'r'd to cancel, expiate, raise, adorn,

And reinstate us on the rock of peace,

Let it not share its predecessor's fate,

Nor, like its elder sister's, die a fool.

320

Shall it evaporate in fume, fly off

Fuliginous, and stain us deeper still?

Shall we be poorer for the plenty pour'd?

More wretched for the clemencies of heaven?

Where shall I find him? Angels! tell me where: 325

You know him; he is near you; point him out.

Shall I see glories beaming from his brow,

Or trace his footsteps by the rising flowers?

Your golden wings, now hov'ring o'er him, shed

Protection; now are waving in applause

330

To that blest son of foresight! lord of fate!

That awful independent on to-morrow!

Whose work is done; who triumphs in the past;

Whose yesterdays look backwards with a smile,

Nor, like the Parthian, wound him as they fly: 335

That common but opprobrious lot! Past hours,

If not by guilt, yet wound us by their flight,

If folly bounds our prospect by the grave,

All feeling of futurity benumb'd;

All godlike passion for eternal quench'd;

340

All relish of realities expir'd;

Renounc'd all correspondence with the skies;

Our freedom chain'd; quite wingless our desire;

In sense dark-prison'd all that ought to soar;

Prone to the centre; crawling in the dust;

245

Dismounted ev'ry great and glorious aim;

Imbruted ev'ry faculty divine;

Heart-bury'd in the rubbish of the world.

The world, that gulf of souls, immortal souls,

Souls elevate, angelic, wing'd with fire 350
 To reach the distant skies, and triumph there
 On thrones, which shall not mourn their masters chang'd;
 Tho' we from earth, ethereal they that fell.
 Such veneration due, O man, to man!

Who venerate themselves the world despise. 355
 For what, gay friend! is this escutcheon'd world,
 Which hangs out death in one eternal night?
 A night that glooms us in the noontide ray,
 And wraps our thought at banquets in the shroud.
 Life's little stage is a small eminence, 360
 Inch high the grave above, that home of man,
 Where dwells the multitude: we gaze around;
 We read their monuments; we sigh; and while
 We sigh we sink; and are what we deplor'd:
 Lamenting or lamented all our lot! 365

Is Death at distance? No; he has been on thee,
 And giv'n sure earnest of his final blow.
 Those hours that lately smil'd, where are they now?
 Pallid to thought, and ghastly! drown'd, all drown'd
 In that great deep which nothing disembogues! 370
 And, dying, they bequeath'd thee small renown.
 The rest are on the wing: how fleet their flight!
 Already has the fatal train took fire;
 A moment, and the world's blown up to thee;
 The sun is darkness, and the stars are dust. 375

'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
 And ask them what report they bore to heaven,
 And how they might have borne more welcome news.
 Their answers form what men Experience call;
 If Wisdom's friend, her best; if not, worst foe. 380
 O reconcile them! kind Experience cries,
 "There's nothing here but what as nothing weighs;
 "The more our joy, the more we know it vain,
 "And by success are tutor'd to despair."
 Nor is it only thus, but must be so. 385
 Who knows not this, tho' grey, is still a child.
 Loose then from earth the grasp of fond desire,
 Weigh anchor, and some happier clime explore.
 Art thou so moor'd thou canst not disengage,

Nor give thy thoughts a ply to future scenes ? 390
 Since by life's passing breath, blown up from earth,
 Light as the summer's dust, we take in air
 A moment's giddy flight, and fall again,
 Join the dull mass, increase the trodden soil,
 And sleep, till earth herself shall be no more ; 395
 Since then (as emmets, their small world o'erthrown)
 We, fore amaz'd, from out earth's ruins crawl,
 And rise to fate extreme of foul or fair,
 As man's own choice (controller of the skies !)
 As man's despotic will, perhaps one hour, 400
 (O how omnipotent is time !) decrees,
 Should not each warning give a strong alarm ?
 Warning, far less than that of bosom torn
 From bosom, bleeding o'er the sacred dead !
 Should not each dial strike us as we pass, 405
 Portentous, as the written wall which struck,
 O'er midnight bowls, the proud Assyrian pale,
 Erewhile high flush'd with insolence and wine ?
 Like that the dial speaks, and points to thee,
 Lorenzo ! loath to break thy banquet up. 410
 " O man ! thy kingdom is departing from thee,
 " And while it lasts is emptier than my shade."
 Its silent language such : nor need'st thou call
 Thy magi to decypher what it means.
 Know, like the Median, fate is in thy walls : 415
 Dost ask how ? whence ? Belshazzar-like, amaz'd.
 Man's make encloses the sure seeds of death ;
 Life feeds the murderer : ingrate ! he thrives
 On her own meal, and then his nurse devours.
 But here, Lorenzo, the delusion lies ; 420
 That solar shadow, as it measures life,
 It life resembles too. Life speeds away
 From point to point, tho' seeming to stand still.
 The cunning fugitive is swift by stealth :
 Too subtle in the movement to be seen ; 425
 Yet soon man's hour is up, and we are gone.
 Warnings point out our danger, gnomons time :
 As these are useless when the sun is set ;
 So those, but when more glorious Reason shines.

Reason should judge in all ; in Reason's eye 430
 That sedentary shadow travels hard ;
 But such our gravitation to the wrong,
 So prone our hearts to whisper what we wish,
 'Tis later with the wise than he's aware :
 A Wilmington goes slower than the sun ; 435
 And all mankind mistake their time of day ;
 E'en age itself. Fresh hopes are hourly sown
 In furrow'd brows. To gentle life's descent
 We shut our eyes, and think it is a plain.
 We take fair days in winter for the spring, 440
 And turn our blessings into bane. Since oft
 Man must compute that age he cannot feel,
 He scarce believes he's older for his years :
 Thus, at life's latest eve, we keep in store
 One disappointment sure, to crown the rest ; 445
 The disappointment of a promis'd hour.

On this, or similar, Philander ! thou
 Whose mind was moral, as the preacher's tongue ;
 And strong, to wield all science, worth the name ;
 How often we talk'd down the summer's sun, 450
 And cool'd our passions by the breezy stream !
 How often thaw'd and shorten'd winter's eve,
 By conflict kind, that struck out latent truth,
 Best found, so fought, to the recluse more coy !
 Thoughts disentangle passing o'er the lip ; 455
 Clean runs the thread ; if not, 'tis thrown away,
 Or kept to tie up nonsense for a song ;
 Song, fashionably fruitless ; such as stains
 The fancy, and unhallow'd passion fires ;
 Chiming her saints to Cytherea's fane. 460

Know'st thou, Lorenzo ! what a friend contains ?
 As bees mix'd nectar draw from fragrant flow'rs,
 So men from friendship, wisdom, and delight ;
 Twins ty'd by nature, if they part, they die.
 Hast thou no friend to set thy mind abroad ? 465
 Good sense will stagnate. Thoughts shut up want air,
 And spoil, like bales unopen'd to the sun.
 Had thought been all, sweet speech had been deny'd ;

Speech! thought's canal; speech! thought's criterion
too:

Thought in the mine may come forth gold or dross;
When coin'd in word, we know its real worth: 471

If sterling, store it for thy future use;

'Twill buy thee benefit, perhaps renown.

Thought, too, deliver'd, is the more possess'd;

Teaching we learn, and giving we retain 475

The births of intellect, when dumb forgot.

Speech ventilates our intellectual fire;

Speech burnishes our mental magazine;

Brightens for ornament, and whets for use.

What numbers, sheath'd in erudition, lie, 480

Plung'd to the hilts, in venerable tomes,

And rusted in, who might have borne an edge,

And play'd a sprightly beam, if born to speech;

If born blest heirs of half their mother's tongue!

'Tis thought's exchange, which, like th' alternate push
Of waves conflicting, breaks the learned scum, 486

And defecates the student's standing pool.

In contemplation is his proud resource?

'Tis poor as proud, by converse unsustained.

Rude thought runs wild in Contemplation's field; 490

Converse, the menage, breaks it to the bit

Of due restraint; and Emulation's spur

Gives graceful energy, by rivals aw'd.

'Tis converse qualifies for solitude,

As exercise for salutary rest; 495

By that untutor'd, Contemplation raves,

And Nature's fool by Wisdom's is outdone.

Wisdom, tho' richer than Peruvian mines,

And sweeter than the sweet ambrosial hive,

What is she but the means of happiness? 500

That unobtain'd, than Folly more a fool;

A melancholy fool without her bells.

Friendship, the means of wisdom, richly gives

The precious end, which makes our wisdom wise.

Nature, in zeal for human amity, 505

Denies or damps an undivided joy.

Joy is an import; joy is an exchange;

Joy flies monopolists : it calls for two ;
 Rich fruit ! heaven-planted ! never pluckt by one.
 Needful auxiliars are our friends, to give 510
 To social man true relish of himself.
 Full on ourselves, descending in a line,
 Pleasure's bright beam is feeble in delight :
 Delight intense is taken by rebound ;
 Reverberated pleasures fire the breast. 515
 Celestial Happiness, whene'er she stoops
 To visit earth, one shrine the goddess finds,
 And one alone, to make her sweet amends
 For absent heaven—the bosom of a friend ;
 Where heart meets heart, reciprocally soft, 520
 Each other's pillow to repose divine.
 Beware the counterfeit ; in passion's flame
 Hearts melt, but melt like ice, soon harder froze.
 True love strikes root in reason ; passion's foe :
 Virtue alone entenders us for life : 425
 I wrong her much—Entenders us for ever :
 Of friendship's fairest fruits, the fruit most fair
 Is virtue kindling at a rival fire,
 And, emulously, rapid in her race.
 O the soft enmity ! endearing strife ! 430
 This carries friendship to her noon-tide point,
 And gives the rivet of eternity.

From friendship, which outlives my former themes,
 Glorious survivor of old time and death ;
 From friendship, thus, that flower of heavenly seed, 535
 The wise extract earth's most Hyblean bliss,
 Superior wisdom, crown'd with smiling joy.

But for whom blossoms this Elysian flower ?
 Abroad they find, who cherish it at home.
 Lorenzo ! pardon what my love extorts, 540
 An honest love, and not afraid to frown.
 Though choice of follies fasten on the great,
 None clings more obstinate than fancy fond
 That sacred friendship is their easy prey ;
 Caught by the wafture of a golden lure, 545
 Or fascination of a high-born smile.
 Their smiles, the great, and the coquet, throw out

For other's hearts, tenacious of their own ;
 And we no less of ours when such the bait.
 Ye fortune's cofferers ! Ye powers of wealth ! 550
 Can gold gain friendship ? Impudence of hope !
 As well mere man an angel might beget.
 Love, and love only, is the loan for love.
 Lorenzo ! pride repress ; nor hope to find
 A friend but what has found a friend in thee. 555
 All like the purchase ; few the price will pay ;
 And this makes friends such miracles below.
 What if (since daring on so nice a theme)
 I shew thee friendship delicate as dear,
 Of tender violations apt to die ? 560
 Reserve will wound it ; and distrust destroy.
 Deliberate on all things with thy friend.
 But since friends grow not thick on every bough,
 Nor every friend unrotten at the core ;
 First, on thy friend, deliberate with thyself ; 565
 Pause, ponder, sift ; not eager in the choice,
 Nor jealous of the chosen ; fixing, fix ;
 Judge before friendship, then confide till death.
 Well, for thy friend ; but nobler far for thee ;
 How gallant danger for earth's highest prize ! 570
 A friend is worth all hazards we can run.
 " Poor is the friendless master of a world :
 " A world in purchase for a friend is gain."
 So sung he (angels hear that angels sing !
 Angels from friendship gather half their joy) 575
 So sung Philander, as his friend went round
 In the rich ichor, in the generous blood
 Of Bacchus, purple god of joyous wit,
 A brow solute, and ever-laughing eye.
 He drank long health, and virtue, to his friend, 580
 His friend, who warm'd him more, who more inspir'd.
 Friendship's the wine of life ; but friendship new
 (Not such was his) is neither strong nor pure.
 O for the bright complexion, cordial warmth,
 And elevating spirit of a friend, 585
 For twenty summers ripening by my side,
 All feculence of falsehood long thrown down ;

All social virtues rising in his soul,
 As crystal clear, and smiling as they rise!
 Here nectar flows; it sparkles in our sight; 590
 Rich to the taste, and genuine from the heart.
 High-flavour'd bliss for gods! on earth how rare!
 On earth how lost!—Philander is no more.

Think'st thou the theme intoxicates my song?
 Am I too warm?—Too warm I cannot be. 595
 I lov'd him much, but now I love him more.
 Like birds, whose beauties languish, half-conceal'd,
 Till, mounted on the wing, their glossy plumes,
 Expanded, shine with azure, green, and gold:
 How blessings brighten as they take their flight! 600
 His flight Philander took; his upward flight,
 If ever soul ascended. Had he dropp'd,
 (That eagle genius!) O had he let fall
 One feather as he flew, I then had wrote
 What friends might flatter, prudent foes forbear, 605
 Rivals scarce damn, and Zoilus reprieve.
 Yet what I can, I must: it were profane
 To quench a glory lighted at the skies,
 And cast in shadows his illustrious close.
 Strange! the theme most affecting, most sublime, 610
 Momentous most to man, should sleep unsung!
 And yet it sleeps, by genius unawak'd,
 Pagan or Christian; to the blush of wit
 Man's highest triumph! man's profoundest fall!
 The deathbed of the just, is yet undrawn 615
 By mortal hand! it merits a divine:
 Angels should paint it, angels ever there,
 There, on a post of honour and of joy.

Dare I presume, then? but Philander bids,
 And glory tempts, and inclination calls— 620
 Yet am I struck, as struck the soul beneath
 Aërial groves' impenetrable gloom,
 Or in some mighty ruin's solemn shade;
 Or, gazing by pale lamps, on high-born dust,
 In vaults; thin courts of poor unflatter'd kings; 625
 Or at the midnight altar's hallow'd flame.
 It is religion to proceed: I pause—

And enter, aw'd, the temple of my theme.

It is his deathbed? No; it is his shrine;

Behold him there just rising to a god. 630

The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileg'd beyond the common walk

Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heav'n.

Fly, ye profane! if not, draw near with awe,

Receive the blessing, and adore the chance 635

That threw in this Bethesda your disease:

If unrestor'd by this, despair your cure.

For here resistless Demonstration dwells;

A deathbed's a detector of the heart.

Here tir'd Dissimulation drops her mask 640

Thro' life's grimace, that mistress of the scene!

Here real and apparent are the same.

You see the man: you see his hold on heaven,

If sound his virtue, as Philander's sound.

Heaven waits not the last moment; owns her friends

On this side death, and points them out to men, 646

A lecture silent, but of sov'reign power!

To Vice confusion, and to Virtue peace.

Whatever farce the boastful hero plays,

Virtue alone has majesty in death, 650

And greater still, the more the tyrant frowns.

Philander! he severely frown'd on thee.

"No warning given! unceremonious fate!

"A sudden rush from life's meridian joy!

"A wrench from all we love! from all we are! 655

"A restless bed of pain! a plunge opaque

"Beyond conjecture! feeble Nature's dread!

"Strong Reason's shudder at the dark unknown!

"A sun extinguish'd! a just opening grave! 659

"And, oh! the last, last; what? (can words express?

"Thought reach it?) the last—silence of a friend!"

Where are those horrors, that amazement, where,

This hideous group of ills, which singly shock,

Demand from man.—I thought him man till now.

Thro' Nature's wreck, thro' vanquish'd agonies, 665

(Like the stars struggling thro' this midnight gloom)

What gleams of joy! what more than human peace!

Where the frail mortal, the poor abject worm?
No, not in death the mortal to be found.

His conduct is a legacy for all; 670
Richer than Mammon's for his single heir.
His comforters he comforts; great in ruin,
With unreluctant grandeur, gives, not yields,
His soul sublime, and closes with his fate.

How our hearts burnt within us at the scene! 675
Whence this brave bound o'er limits fix'd to man?
His God sustains him in his final hour!
His final hour brings glory to his God!
Man's glory heav'n vouchsafes to call her own,
We gaze, we weep; mix'd tears of grief and joy! 680
Amazement strikes! devotion bursts to flame!
Christians adore! and infidels believe.

As some tall tow'r, or lofty mountain's brow,
Detains the sun, illustrious, from its height,
While rising vapours, and descending shades, 685
With damps and darkness drown the spacious vale,
Undamp't by doubt, undarken'd by despair,
Philander thus augustly rears his head,
At that black hour, which gen'ral horror sheds
On the low level of th' inglorious throng: 690
Sweet peace, and heavenly hope, and humble joy,
Divinely beam on his exalted soul;
Destruction gild, and crown him for the skies,
With incommunicable lustre bright. 694

THE COMPLAINT.

NIGHT III.

NARCISSA.

Humbly inscribed to

HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF PORTLAND.

Ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere manes. Virg.

FROM dreams, where thought in Fancy's maze runs
To reason, that heav'n-lighted lamp in man, [mad,
Once more I wake; and at the destin'd hour,
Punctual as lovers to the moment sworn,
I keep my assignation with my woe. 5

O ! lost to virtue, lost to manly thought,
Lost to the noble sallies of the soul!

Who think it solitude to be alone.

Communion sweet ! communion large and high !

Our reason, guardian angel, and our God !

10

Then nearest these, when others most remote ;

And all, ere long, shall be remote but these :

How dreadful, then, to meet them all alone,

A stranger ! unacknowledg'd ! unapprov'd !

Now woo them, wed them, bind them to thy breast : 15

To win thy wish creation has no more :

Or if we wish a fourth, it is a friend. —

But friends how mortal ! dang'rous the desire.

Take Phœbus to yourselves, ye basking bards !

Inebriate at fair Fortune's fountain head,

20

And reeling thro' the wilderness of joy,

Where Sense runs savage, broke from Reason's chain,

And sings false peace, till smother'd by the pall.

My fortune is unlike, unlike my song,

Unlike the deity my song invokes.

25

I to Day's soft-ey'd sister pay my court,

(Endymion's rival) and her aid implore ;

Now first implor'd in succour to the Muse.

Thou who didst lately borrow Cynthia's* form,

And modestly forego thine own ! O thou

30

Who didst thyself, at midnight hours, inspire !

Say, why not Cynthia, patroness of song ?

As thou her crescent, she thy character

Assumes, still more a goddess by the change.

Are there demurring wits who dare dispute

35

This revolution in the world inspir'd ?

Ye train Pierian ! to the lunar sphere,

In silent hour, address your ardent call

For aid immortal, less her brother's right.

She with the spheres harmonious nightly leads

40

The mazy dance, and hears their matchless strain ;

A strain for gods, deny'd to mortal ear.

Transmit it heard, thou silver queen of heav'n !

What title or what name endears thee most ?

* At the Duke of Norfolk's masquerade.

Cynthia! Cyllene! Phœbe!—or dost hear 45
With higher gust, fair Portland of the skies?
Is that the soft enchantment calls thee down,
More pow'rful than of old Circean charm?
Come, but from heav'nly banquets with thee bring
The soul of song, and whisper in mine ear 50
The theft divine; or in propitious dreams
(For dreams are thine) transfuse it thro' the breast
Of thy first votary—but not thy last,
If, like thy namesake, thou art ever kind.

And kind thou wilt be, kind on such a theme; 55
A theme so like thee, a quite lunar theme,
Soft, modest, melancholy, female fair!
A theme that rose all pale, and told my soul
'Twas night; on her fond hopes perpetual night;
A night which struck a damp, a deadlier damp, 60
Than that which smote me from Philander's tomb.
Narcissa follows ere his tomb is clos'd.
Woes cluster; rare are solitary woes;
They love a train; they tread each other's heel;
Her death invades his mournful right, and claims 65
The grief that started from my lids for him;
Seizes the faithless, alienated tear,
Or shares it ere it falls. So frequent death,
Sorrow he more than causes; he confounds;
For human sighs his rival strokes contend, 70
And make distress distraction. Oh, Philander!
What was thy fate? a double fate to me;
Portent and pain! a menace and a blow!
Like the black raven hov'ring o'er my peace,
Not less a bird of omen than of prey. 75
It call'd Narcissa long before her hour;
It call'd her tender soul by break of bliss,
From the first blossom, from the buds of joy;
Those few our noxious fate unblasted leaves
In this inclement clime of human life. 80

Sweet harmonist! and beautiful as sweet!
And young as beautiful! and soft as young!
And gay as soft! and innocent as gay!
And happy (if aught happy here) as good!

For Fortune fond had built her nest on high.
 Like birds quite exquisite of note and plume,
 Transfix'd by fate (who loves a lofty mark)
 How from the summit of the grove she fell,
 And left it unharmonious! all its charms
 Extinguish'd in the wonders of her song!

90

Her song still vibrates in my ravish'd ear,
 Still melting there, and with voluptuous pain
 (O to forget her!) thrilling thro' my heart!

Song, beauty, youth, love, virtue, joy! this group
 Of bright ideas, flow'rs of Paradise,

95

As yet unforfeit! in one blaze we bind,
 Kneel, and present it to the skies, as all

We guess of heav'n; and these were all her own;
 And she was mine; and I was—was!—most blest—

Gay title of the deepest misery!

100

As bodies grow more pond'rous robb'd of life.

Good lost weighs more in grief than gain in joy.

Like blossom'd trees o'erturn'd by vernal storm,

Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay;

And if in death still lovely, lovelier there,

105

Far lovelier! pity swells the tide of love.

And will not the severe excuse a sigh?

Scorn the proud man that is ashamed to weep.

Our tears indulg'd indeed deserve our shame.

Ye that e'er lost an angel, pity me!

110

Soon as the lustre languish'd in her eye,

Dawning a dimmer day on human sight,

And on her cheek, the residence of spring,

Pale Omen sat, and scatter'd fears around

On all that saw, (and who would cease to gaze

115

That once had seen?) with haste, parental haste,

I flew, I snatch'd her from the rigid north,

Her native bed, on which bleak Boreas blew,

And bore her nearer to the sun: the sun

(As if the sun could envy) check'd his beam,

120

Deny'd his wonted succour; nor with more

Regret beheld her drooping than the bells

Of lilies, fairest lilies, not so fair!

Queen lilies! and ye painted populace!

Who dwell in fields, and lead ambrosial lives ! 125
 In morn and ev'ning dew your beauties bathe,
 And drink the sun, which gives your cheeks to glow,
 And outblush (mine excepted) ev'ry fair ;
 You gladlier grew ambitious of her hand,
 Which often cropt your odours, incense meet 130
 To thought so pure ! ye lovely fugitives !
 Coeval race with man ! for man you smile ;
 Why not smile at him too ? You share, indeed,
 His sudden pangs, but not his constant pain.

So man is made ; nought ministers delight 135
 But what his glowing passions can engage ;
 And glowing passions bent on aught below,
 Must, soon or late, with anguish turn the scale ;
 And anguish after rapture how severe !
 Rapture ? bold man ! who tempts the wrath divine, 140
 By plucking fruit deny'd to mortal taste,
 While here presuming on the rights of heav'n.
 For transport dost thou call on ev'ry hour,
 Lorenzo ? At thy friend's expence be wise :
 Lean not on earth ; 'twill pierce thee to the heart ; 145
 A broken reed at best ; but oft a spear :
 On its sharp point Peace bleeds, and Hope expires.

Turn, hopeless thought ! turn from her.—Thought
 Resenting rallies, and wakes ev'ry woe. [repell'd,
 Snatch'd ere thy prime ! and in thy bridal hour ! 150
 And when kind Fortune, with thy lover, smil'd !
 And when high-flavour'd thy fresh op'ning joys !
 And when blind man pronounc'd thy bliss complete !
 And on a foreign shore, where strangers wept !
 Strangers to thee, and, more surprising still, 155
 Strangers to kindness, wept. Their eyes let fall
 Inhuman tears ! strange tears ! that trickled down
 From marble hearts ! obdurate tenderness !
 A tenderness that call'd them more severe,
 In spite of Nature's soft persuasion steel'd : 160
 While Nature melted, Superstition rav'd !
 That mourn'd the dead, and this deny'd a grave.

Their sighs incens'd ; sighs foreign to the will !
 Their will the tiger suck'd, outrag'd the storm,

For, oh! the curs'd ungodliness of zeal!
 While sinful flesh relented, spirit nurs'd
 In blind Infallibility's embrace,
 The fainted spirit petrify'd the breast,
 Deny'd the charity of dust to spread
 O'er dust! a charity their dogs enjoy. 170
 What could I do? what succour? what resource?
 With pious sacrilege a grave I stole;
 With impious piety, that grave I wrong'd;
 Short in my duty; coward in my grief!
 More like a murderer, than friend, I crept, 175
 With soft suspended step, and muffled deep
 In midnight darkness, whisper'd my last sigh.
 I whisper'd what should echo thro' their realms;
 Nor writ her name, whose tomb should pierce the skies.
 Presumptuous fear! How durst I dread her foes, 180
 While nature's loudest dictates I obey'd?
 Pardon necessity, blest shade! of grief
 And indignation rival bursts I pour'd;
 Half execration mingled with my pray'r;
 Kindled at man, while I his God ador'd; 185
 Sore grudg'd the savage land her sacred dust;
 Stamp'd the curs'd soil; and with humanity
 (Deny'd Narcissa) wish'd them all a grave.
 Glows my resentment into guilt? What guilt
 Can equal violations of the dead? 190
 The dead how sacred! Sacred is the dust
 Of this heav'n-labour'd form, erect, divine!
 This heav'n-assum'd majestic robe of earth,
 He deign'd to wear, who hung the vast expanse
 With azure bright, and cloath'd the sun in gold. 195
 When every passion sleeps that can offend;
 When strikes us every motive that can melt;
 When man can wreak his rancour uncontroll'd,
 That strongest curb on insult and ill-will;
 Then, spleen to dust? the dust of innocence? 200
 An angel's dust?—This Lucifer transcends;
 When he contended for the patriarch's bones,
 'Twas not the strife of malice, but of pride;
 The strife of pontiff pride, not pontiff gall,

For less than this is shocking in a race 205
 Most wretched, but from streams of mutual love;
 And uncreated, but for love divine;
 And, but for love divine, this moment lost,
 By fate resorb'd, and sunk in endless night.
 Man hard of heart to man! of horrid things 210
 Most horrid! 'mid stupendous, highly strange!
 Yet oft his courtesies are smothered wrongs;
 Pride brandishes the favours he confers,
 And contumelious his humanity:
 What then his vengeance? Hear it not, ye stars! 215
 And thou, pale moon! turn paler at the sound;
 Man is to man the forest, surest ill.
 A previous blast foretels the rising storm;
 O'erwhelming turrets threaten e'er they fall?
 Volcanos bellow ere they disembogue; 220
 Earth trembles ere her yawning jaws devour;
 And smoke betrays the wide consuming fire:
 Ruin from man is most conceal'd when near,
 And sends the dreadful tidings in the blow.
 Is this the flight of fancy? Would it were! 225
 Heav'n's Sovereign saves all beings, but himself,
 That hideous sight, a naked human heart.

Fir'd is the Muse? And let the Muse be fir'd;
 Who not inflam'd, when what he speaks, he feels,
 And in the nerve most tender, in his friends? 230
 Shame to mankind! Philander had his foes:
 He felt the truths I sing, and I in him.
 But he, nor I, feel more: past ills, Narcissa!
 Are sunk in thee, thou recent wound of heart!
 Which bleeds with other cares, with other pangs; 235
 Pangs numerous, as the numerous ills that swarm'd
 O'er thy distinguish'd fate, and, clust'ring there,
 Thick as the locusts on the land of Nile,
 Made death more deadly, and more dark the grave.
 Reflect (if not forgot my touching tale) 240
 How was each circumstance with aspics arm'd?
 An aspic each, and all an hydra woe:
 What strong Herculean virtue could suffice?—
 Or is it virtue to be conquer'd here?

This hoary cheek a train of tears bedews ;
 And each tear mourns its own distinct distress ;
 And each distress, distinctly mourn'd, demands
 Of grief still more, as heighten'd by the whole.

245

A grief like this proprietors excludes ;
 Not friends alone such obsequies deplore ;
 They make mankind the mourner ; carry sighs
 Far as the fatal Fame can wing her way ;
 And turn the gayest thought of gayest age,
 Down their right channel through the vale of death.

250

The vale of death ! that hush'd Cimmerian vale, 255
 Where Darkness, brooding o'er unfinish'd Fates,
 With raven wing incumbent, waits the day
 (Dread day !) that interdicts all future change !
 That subterranean world, that land of ruin !

Fit walk, Lorenzo, for proud human thought ! 260

There let my thought expatiate, and explore
 Balsamic truths and healing sentiments,
 Of all most wanted, and most welcome, here.

For gay Lorenzo's sake, and for thy own,
 My soul ! " The fruits of dying friends survey ; 265

" Expose the vain of life ; weigh life and death ;

" Give death his eulogy ; thy fear subdue ;

" And labour that first palm of noble minds,

" A manly scorn of terror from the tomb."

This harvest reap from thy Narcissa's grave. 270

As poets feign'd from Ajax streaming blood

Arose, with grief inscrib'd, a mournful flow'r,

Let wisdom blossom from my mortal wound.

And first, of dying friends ; what fruit from these ?

It brings us more than triple aid ; an aid 275

To chase our thoughtlessness, fear, pride, and guilt.

Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud,

To damp our brainless ardours, and abate

That glare of life which often blinds the wise.

Our dying friends are pioneers, to smooth 280

Our rugged pass to death ; to break those bars

Of terror and abhorrence Nature throws

Cross our obstructed way, and thus to make

Welcome, as safe, our port from ev'ry storm.

Each friend by fate snatch'd from us, is a plume 585
 Pluck'd from the wing of human vanity,
 Which makes us stoop from our aërial heights,
 And damp'd with omen of our own decease,
 On drooping pinions of ambition lower'd,
 Just skim earth's surface ere we break it up, 290
 O'er putrid earth to scratch a little dust,
 And save the world a nuisance. Smitten friends
 Are angels sent on errands full of love;
 For us they languish, and for us they die:
 And shall they languish, shall they die, in vain? 295
 Ungrateful, shall we grieve their hov'ring shades,
 Which wait the revolution in our hearts!
 Shall we disdain their silent, soft, address,
 Their posthumous advice, and pious pray'r?
 Senseless as herds that graze their hollow'd graves, 300
 Tread under foot their agonies and groans,
 Frustrate their anguish, and destroy their deaths?
 Lorenzo! no; the thought of death indulge;
 Give it its wholesome empire! let it reign,
 That kind chastiser of thy soul in joy! 305
 Its reign will spread thy glorious conquests far,
 And still the tumults of thy ruffled breast:
 Auspicious era! golden days, begin!
 The thought of death shall, like a god, inspire.
 And why not think on death? Is life the theme 310
 Of every thought? and wish of every hour?
 And song of every joy? Surprising truth!
 The beaten spaniel's fondness not so strange.
 To wave the numerous ills that seize on life
 As their own property, their lawful prey; 315
 Ere man has measur'd half his weary stage,
 His luxuries have left him no reserve,
 No maiden relishes, unbroach'd delights;
 On cold serv'd repetitions he subsists,
 And in the tasteless present chews the past; 320
 Disgusted chews, and scarce can swallow down.
 Like lavish ancestors, his earlier years
 Have disinherited his future hours,
 Which starve on orts, and glean their former field.

Live ever here, Lorenzo!—shocking thought!
 So shocking, they who wish, disown it too; 325
 Disown from shame what they from folly crave.
 Live ever in the womb, nor see the light?
 For what live ever here?—With labouring step
 To tread our former footsteps? Pace the round
 Eternal? To climb life's worn, heavy wheel, 330
 Which draws up nothing new? To beat, and beat
 The beaten track? To bid each wretched day
 The former mock? To surfeit on the same,
 And yawn our joys? Or thank a misery
 For change though sad? To see what we have seen?
 Hear, till unheard, the same old flabber'd tale? 336
 To taste the tasted, and at each return
 Less tasteful? O'er our palates to decant
 Another vintage? Strain a fatter year, 340
 Through loaded vessels, and a laxer tone?
 Crazy machines to grind earth's wasted fruits!
 Ill-ground, and worse concocted! load, not life!
 The rational soul kennels of excess!
 Still-streaming thorough-fares of dull debauch! 345
 Trembling each gulp, lest death should snatch the bowl.

Such of our fine ones is the wish refin'd!

So would they have it: elegant desire!
 Why not invite the bellowing stalls, and wilds?
 But such examples might their riot awe. 350
 Through want of virtue, that is, want of thought,
 (Though on bright thought they father all their flights)
 To what are they reduc'd? To love, and hate,
 The same vain world; to censure, and espouse,
 This painted shrew of life, who calls them fool 355
 Each moment of each day; to flatter bad
 Through dread of worse? to cling to this rude rock,
 Barren to them of good, and sharp with ills,
 And hourly blacken'd with impending storms,
 And infamous for wrecks of human hope— 360
 Scar'd at the gloomy gulf, that yawns beneath.
 Such are their triumphs! such their pangs of joy!
 'Tis time, high time, to shift this dismal scene.
 This hugg'd, this hideous state, what art can cure?

One only ; but that one what all may reach ; 365
 Virtue—she, wonder-working goddess ! charms
 That rock to bloom ; and tames the painted shrew ;
 And, what will more surprise, Lorenzo ! gives
 To life's sick, nauseous iteration, change ;
 And straightens Nature's circle to a line. 370
 Believ' it thou this, Lorenzo ? lend an ear,
 A patient ear ; thou'lt blush to disbelieve.

A languid, leaden, iteration reigns,
 And ever must, o'er those whose joys are joys
 Of sight, smell, taste : the cuckoo-seasons sing 375
 The same dull note to such as nothing prize,
 But what those seasons, from the teeming earth,
 To doating sense indulge. But nobler minds,
 Which relish fruits unripen'd by the sun,
 Make their days various ; various as the dyes 380
 On the dove's neck, which wanton in his rays,
 On minds of dove-like innocence possess'd,
 On lighten'd minds, that bask in virtue's beams,
 Nothing hangs tedious, nothing old revolves
 In that for which they long ; for which they live. 385
 Their glorious efforts, wing'd with heavenly hope,
 Each rising morning sees still higher rise ;
 Each bounteous dawn its novelty presents
 To worth maturing, new strength, lustre, fame ;
 While Nature's circle, like a chariot-wheel 390
 Rolling beneath their elevated aims,
 Makes their fair prospect fairer every hour ;
 Advancing virtue in a line to bliss ;
 Virtue, which christian motives best inspire !
 And bliss, which christain schemes alone endure ! 395
 And shall we then, for Virtue's sake, commence
 Apostates ; and turn infidels for joy ?
 A truth it is, few doubt, but fewer trust,
 " He sins against this life, who flights the next."
 What is this life ? How few their favourite know ?
 Fond in the dark, and blind in our embrace, 400
 By passionately loving life, we make
 Lov'd life unlovely ; hugging her to death.
 We give to time eternity's regard ;

And, dreaming, take our passage for our port. 405

Life has no value as an end, but means;

An end deplorable! a means divine!

When 'tis our all, 'tis nothing; worse than nought;

A nest of pains: when held as nothing, much:

Like some fair humourists, life is most enjoy'd 410

When courted least; most worth, when disesteem'd:

Then 'tis the seat of comfort, rich in peace;

In prospect richer far; important! awful!

Not to be mention'd but with shouts of praise!

Not to be thought on, but with tides of joy! 415

The mighty basis of eternal bliss!

Where now the barren rock? the painted shrew?

Where now, Lorenzo! life's eternal round?

Have I not made my triple promise good?

Vain is the world; but only to be vain. 420

To what compare we then this varying scene,

Whose worth ambiguous rises, and declines?

Waxes, and wanes? (In all propitious, night

Assists me here) compare it to the moon;

Dark in herself, and indigent; but rich 425

In borrow'd lustre from a higher sphere.

When gross guilt interposes, labouring earth,

O'ershadow'd, mourns a deep eclipse of joy;

Her joys, at brightest, pallid, to that font

Of full effulgent glory whence they flow. 430

Nor is that glory distant. Oh Lorenzo!

A good man, and an angel! these between

How thin the barrier! what divides their fate?

Perhaps a moment, or perhaps a year;

Or, if an age, it is a moment still; 435

A moment, or eternity's forgot.

Then be, what once they were, who now are gods;

Be what Philander was, and claim the skies.

Starts timid Nature at the gloomy pass?

The soft transition call it, and be cheer'd: 440

Such it is often, and why not to thee?

To hope the best, is pious, brave, and wise;

And may itself procure, what it presumes.

Life is much flatter'd, death is much traduc'd;

Compare the rivals, and the kinder crown. 445
 "Strange competition!"—True, Lorenzo, strange;
 So little life can cast into the scale.

Life makes the soul dependent on the dust;
 Death gives her wings to mount above the spheres.
 Through chinks, styl'd organs, dim life peeps at light;
 Death bursts th' involving cloud, and all is day; 451
 All eye, all ear, the disembod' d pow'r,
 Death has feign'd evils, nature shall not feel;
 Life, ill's substantial, wisdom cannot shun.
 Is not the mighty mind, that son of heaven! 455
 By tyrant life dethron'd, imprison'd, pain'd?
 By death enlarg'd, ennobled, deify'd?
 Death but entombs the body; Life the soul.

"Is Death then guiltless? How he marks his way
 "With dreadful waste of what deserves to shine! 460
 "Art, genius, fortune, elevated pow'r!
 "With various lustres these light up the world,
 "Which Death puts out, and darkens human race."
 I grant, Lorenzo! this indictment just:
 The sage, peer, potentate, king, conqueror! 365
 Death humbles these; more barbarous life than man.
 Life is the triumph of our mouldering clay;
 Death of the spirit infinite! divine!
 Death has no dread but what frail life imparts;
 Nor life true joy, but what kind Death improves. 470
 No bliss has life to boast, till death can give
 Far greater; life's a debtor to the grave,
 Dark lattice! letting in eternal day.

Lorenzo! blush at fondness for a life
 Which sends celestial souls on errand vile, 475
 To cater for the sense; and serve at boards,
 Where every ranger of the wilds, perhaps
 Each reptile, justly claims our upper hand.
 Luxurious feast! a soul, a soul immortal,
 In all the dainties of a brute bemir'd! 480
 Lorenzo! blush at terror for a death,
 Which gives thee to repose in festive bowers,
 Where nectars sparkle, angels minister,
 And more than angels share, and raise, and crown,

And eternise, the birth, bloom, bursts of bliss. 485

What need I more? O Death! the palm is thine.

Then welcome, Death, thy dreaded harbingers,

Age and Disease; Disease, tho' long my guest,

That plucks my nerves, those tender strings of life,

Which, pluck'd a little more, will toll the bell 490

That calls my few friends to my funeral;

Where feeble Nature drops, perhaps, a tear,

While Reason and Religion, better taught,

Congratulate the dead, and crown his tomb

With wreath triumphant. Death is victory; 495

It binds in chains the raging ills of life:

Lust and Ambition, Wrath and Avarice,

Dragg'd at his chariot-wheel, applaud his power.

That ills corrosive, cares importunate,

Are not immortal too, O Death! is thine. 500

Our day of dissolution!—name it right,

'Tis our great pay-day; 'tis our harvest, rich

And ripe. What tho' the sickle, sometimes keen,

Just scars us as we reap the golden grain?

More than thy balm, O Gilead! heals the wound. 505

Birth's feeble cry, and Death's deep dismal groan,

Are slender tributes low-tax'd Nature pays

For mighty gain: the gain of each a life.

But, O! the last the former so transcends,

Life dies compar'd; Life lives beyond the grave. 510

And feel I, Death, no joy from thought of thee?

Death, the great counsellor, who man inspires

With ev'ry nobler thought and fairer deed!

Death, the deliverer, who rescues man!

Death, the rewarder, who the rescu'd crowns! 515

Death, that absolves my birth, a curse without it!

Rich Death, that realizes all my cares,

Toils, virtues, hopes; without it a chimera!

Death, of all pain the period, not of joy:

Joy's source and subject still subsist unhurt; 520

One in my soul, and one in her great fire;

Tho' the four winds were warring for my dust.

Yes, and from winds and waves, and central night,

Tho' prison'd there, my dust, too, I reclaim.

(To dust when drop proud nature's proudest spheres)
 And live entire. Death is the crown of life: 526
 Were death deny'd, poor man would live in vain:
 Were death deny'd, to live would not be life:
 Were death deny'd, e'en fools would wish to die.
 Death wounds to cure; we fall, we rise, we reign! 530
 Spring from our fetters, fasten in the skies,
 Where blooming Eden withers in our sight.
 Death gives us more than was in Eden lost:
 This king of terrors is the prince of peace.
 When shall I die to vanity, pain, death?
 When shall I die?—when shall I live for ever? 536

THE COMPLAINT.

NIGHT IV.

THE CHRISTIAN TRIUMPH.

*Containing our only Cure for the Fear of Death; and proper Sentiments
 of Heart on that inestimable Blessing.*

Humbly inscribed

TO THE HON. MR. YORKE.

A MUCH indebted muse, O Yorke! intrudes.
 Amid the smiles of fortune, and of youth,
 Thine ear is patient of a serious song.
 How deep implanted in the breast of man
 The dread of death! I sing its sovereign cure. 5
 Why start at Death? where is he? Death arriv'd,
 Is past; not come or gone, he's never here.
 Ere hope, sensation fails; black-boding man
 Receives, not suffers, Death's tremendous blow.
 The knell, the shroud, the mattock, and the grave;
 The deep damp vault, the darkness, and the worm; 11
 These are the bugbears of a winter's eve,
 The terrors of the living, not the dead;
 Imagination's fool, and Error's wretch.
 Man makes a death which Nature never made; 15
 Then on the point of his own fancy falls,
 And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one.
 But were death frightful, what has age to fear?

If prudent, age should meet the friendly foe,
And shelter in his hospitable gloom.

20

I scarce can meet a monument, but holds
My younger; every date cries—"Come away."
And what recalls me? Look the world around,
And tell me what: the wisest cannot tell.

Should any born of woman give his thought
Full range on just Dislike's unbounded field;

25

Of things the vanity; of men, the flaws;
Flaws in the best; the many, flaw all o'er;
As leopard's spotted, or as Ethiops dark;
Vivacious ill; good dying immature;

30

(How immature, Narcissa's marble tells!)

And at his death bequeathing endless pain;
His heart, though bold, would sicken at the sight,
And spend itself in sighs for future scenes.

But grant to life (and just it is to grant
To lucky life) some perquisites of joy;

35

A time there is, when, like a thrice-told tale,
Long-ripled life of sweet can yield no more,

But from our comment on the comedy,
Pleasing reflections on parts well sustain'd,

40

Or purpos'd emendations where we fail'd,
Or hopes of plaudits from our candid judge,
When on their exit souls are bid unrobe,

Toss Fortune back her tinsel, and her plume,
And drop this mask of flesh behind the scene.

45

With me, that time is come; my world is dead;
A new world rises, and new manners reign:
Foreign comedians, a spruce band! arrive,
To push me from the scene, or hiss me there.

What a pert race starts up! the stranger's gaze,

50

And I at them; my neighbour is unknown;
Nor that the worst: Ah me! the dire effect

Of loitering here, of death defrauded long;
Of old so gracious (and let that suffice)

My very master knows me not.—

55

Shall I dare say, peculiar is the fate?
I've been so long remember'd, I'm forgot.
An object ever pressing dims the sight,

And hides behind its ardour to be seen.
 When in his courtiers ears I pour my plaint, 60
 They drink it as the nectar of the great,
 And squeeze my hand, and beg me come to-morrow.
 Refusal ! canst thou wear a smother form ?
 Indulge, nor conceive I drop my theme :
 Who cheapens life, abates the fear of death. 65
 Twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy,
 Court favour, yet untaken, I besiege ;
 Ambition's ill-judg'd effort to be rich.
 Alas ! ambition makes my little less ;
 Embittering the possess : Why wish for more ? 70
 Wishing, of all employments, is the worst ;
 Philosophy's reverse : and health's decay !
 Were I as plump as stall'd theology,
 Wishing would waste me to this shade again.
 Were I as wealthy as a South-sea dream, 75
 Wishing is an expedient to be poor.
 Wishing, that constant hectic of a fool ;
 Caught at a court, purg'd off by purer air
 And simpler diet ; gifts of rural life !
 Blest be that hand divine, which gently laid 80
 My heart at rest, beneath this humble shed.
 The world's a stately bark, on dangerous seas,
 With pleasure seen, but boarded at our peril ;
 Here, on a single plank, thrown safe ashore,
 I hear the tumult of the distant throng, 85
 As that of seas remote, or dying storms :
 And meditate on scenes, more silent still ;
 Pursue my theme, and fight the fear of death.
 Here, like a shepherd gazing from his hut,
 Touching his reed, or leaning on his staff, 90
 Eager Ambition's fiery chace I see ;
 I see the circling hunt, of noisy men,
 Burst Law's enclosure, leap the mounds of Right,
 Pursuing, and pursu'd, each other's prey ;
 As wolves, for rapine ; as the fox, for wiles ; 95
 Till death, that mighty hunter, earths them all.
 Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour ?
 What though we wade in wealth, or soar in fame ?

Earth's highest station ends in, "Here he lies,"
And, "dust to dust," concludes her noblest song. 100
If this song lives, posterity shall know
One, tho' in Britain born, with courtiers bred,
Who thought e'en gold might come a day too late,
Nor on his subtle deathbed plann'd his scheme
For future vacancies in church or state, 105
Some avocation deeming it—to die;
Unbit by rage canine of dying rich,
Guilt's blunder! and the loudest laugh of hell.
O my coevals! remnants of yourselves!
Poor human ruins tott'ring o'er the grave! 110
Shall we, shall aged men, like aged trees,
Strike deeper their vile root, and closer cling,
Still more enamoured of this wretched soil?
Shall our pale wither'd hands be still stretch'd out,
Trembling at once with eagerness and age? 115
With av'rice and convulsions, grasping hard?
Grasping at air! for what has earth beside?
Man wants but little, nor that little long:
How soon must he resign his very dust,
Which frugal Nature lent him for an hour! 120
Years unexperienced rush on num'rous ills:
And soon as man, expert from time, has found
The key of life, it opes the gates of death.

When in this vale of years I backward look,
And miss such numbers, numbers, too, of such 125
Firmer in health, and greener in their age,
And stricter on their guard, and fitter far
To play life's subtle game, I scarce believe
I still survive. And am I fond of life,
Who scarce can think it possible I live? 130
Alive by miracle! or, what is next,
Alive by Mead! if I am still alive,
Who long have bury'd what gives life to live,
Firmness of nerve, and energy of thought.
Life's lee is not more shallow than impure 135
And vapid: Sense and Reason shew the door,
Call for my bier, and point me to the dust.
O thou great Arbiter of life and death,

Nature's immortal, immaterial fun!

Whose all prolific beam late call'd me forth 140

From darkness, teeming darkness, where I lay

The worm's inferior, and, in rank, beneath

The dust I tread on, high to bear my brow,

To drink the spirit of the golden day,

And triumph in existence, and couldst know 145

No motive but my bliss, and hast ordain'd

A rise in blessing! with the Patriarch's joy

Thy call I follow to the land unknown;

I trust in thee, and know in whom I trust:

Or life or death is equal; neither weighs; 150

All weight in this—O let me live to thee!

Tho' Nature's terrors thus may be repress,

Still frowns grim Death; guilt points the tyrant's spear.

And whence all human guilt? From death forgot.

Ah me! too long I set at nought the swarm 155

Of friendly warnings which around me flew,

And smil'd unsmitten. Small my cause to smile!

Death's admonitions, like shafts upwards shot,

More dreadful by delay, the longer ere

They strike our hearts, the deeper is their wound: 160

O think how deep, Lorenzo! here it stings;

Who can appease its anguish? How it burns!

What hand the barb'd, envenom'd thought can draw?

What healing hand can pour the balm of peace,

And turn my sight undaunted on the tomb? 165

With joy—with grief, that healing hand I see:

Ah! too conspicuous! it is fix'd on high.

On high?—what means my frenzy? I blaspheme:

Alas! how low! how far beneath the skies!

The skies it form'd, and now it bleeds for me— 170

But bleeds the balm I want—yet still it bleeds;

Draw the dire steel—ah, no! the dreadful blessing

What heart or can sustain or dares forego?

There hangs all human hope; that nail supports

The falling universe: that gone we drop; 175

Horror receives us, and the dismal wish

Creation had been smother'd in her birth—

Darkness his curtain, and his bed the dust,

When stars and sun are dust beneath his throne ;
In heaven itself can such indulgence dwell ? 180
O what a groan was there ! a groan not his :
He seiz'd our dreadful right, the load sustain'd,
And heav'd the mountain from a guilty world.
A thousand worlds, so bought, were bought too dear ;
Sensations new in angels' bosoms rise, 185
Suspend their song, and make a pause in bliss.

O for their song to reach my lofty theme !
Inspire me, Night ! with all thy tuneful spheres,
Whilst I with seraphs share seraphic themes,
And shew to men the dignity of man, 190
Lest I blaspheme my subject with my song.
Shall Pagan pages glow celestial flame,
And Christian languish ? On our hearts, not heads,
Falls the foul infamy. My heart ! awake :
What can awake thee, unawak'd by this, 195
“ Expended Deity on human weal ? ”
Feel the great truths which burst the tenfold night
Of heathen error, with a golden flood
Of endless day. To feel is to be fir'd ;
And to believe, Lorenzo ! is to feel. 200

Thou most indulgent, most tremendous power !
Still more tremendous for thy wondrous love !
That arms, with awe more awful, thy commands,
And foul transgression dips in sevenfold guilt ;
How our hearts tremble at thy love immense ! 205
In love immense, inviolably just !
Thou, rather than thy justice should be stain'd,
Didst stain the cross ; and, work of wonders far
The greatest, that thy dearest far might bleed.

Bold thought ! shall I dare speak it or repress ? 210
Should man more execrate or boast the guilt
Which rous'd such vengeance ? which such love inflam'd ?
O'er guilt (how mountainous !) with outstretch'd arms
Stern Justice, and soft-smiling Love, embrace,
Supporting, in full majesty, thy throne, 215
When seem'd its majesty to need support.
Or that, or man, inevitably lost :
What but the fathomless of thought divine,

Could labour such expedient from despair,
 And rescue both? Both rescue! both exalt! 220
 O how are both exalted by the deed!

The wondrous deed! or shall I call it more?

A wonder in Omnipotence itself!

A mystery no less to gods than men!

Not thus our infidels th' Eternal draw, 225

A God all-o'er consummate, absolute,

Full orb'd, in his whole round of rays complete:

They set at odds heaven's jarring attributes,

And with one excellence another wound;

Maim heaven's perfection, break its equal beams, 230

Bid mercy triumph over—God himself,

Undeify'd by their opprobrious praise:

A God all mercy is a God unjust.

Ye brainless wits! ye baptis'd infidels!

Ye worse for mending! wash'd to fouler stains! 235

The ransom was paid down; the fund of heaven,

Heaven's inexhaustible, exhausted fund,

Amazing and amaz'd, pour'd forth the price,

All price beyond: tho' curious to compute,

Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum: 240

Its value vast ungrasp'd by minds create,

For ever hides and glows in the Supreme.

And was the ransom paid? it was; and paid
 (What can exalt the bounty more?) for you.

The sun beheld it.—No, the shocking scene 245

Drove back his chariot: midnight veil'd his face;

Not such as this, not such as Nature makes;

A midnight Nature shudder'd to behold;

A midnight new! a dread eclipse (without
 Opposing spheres) from her Creator's frown! 250

Sun! didst thou fly thy Maker's pain? or start

At that enormous load of human guilt

Which bow'd his blessed head, o'erwhelm'd his cross,

Made groan the centre, burst earth's marble womb

With pangs, strange pangs! deliver'd of her dead? 255

Hell howl'd; and heaven that hour let fall a tear:

Heaven wept, that men might smile! Heaven bled,

Might never die!— [that man

And is devotion virtue? 'tis compell'd. 259

What heart of stone but glows at thoughts like these?

Such contemplations mount us, and should mount

The mind still higher, nor ever glance on man

Unraptur'd, uninflam'd.—Where roll my thoughts

To rest from wonders? other wonders rise,

And strike where'er they roll: my soul is caught: 265

Heaven's sov'reign blessings, clust'ring from the cross,

Rush on her, in a throng, and close her round,

The pris'ner of amaze!—In his blest life

I see the path, and in his death the price,

And in his great ascent the proof supreme

270

Of immortality. And did he rise?

Hear, O ye nations! hear it, O ye dead!

He rose! he rose! he burst the bars of death.

Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!

And give the King of Glory to come in.

275

Who is the King of Glory? he who left

His throne of glory for the pang of death.

Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!

And give the King of Glory to come in.

Who is the King of Glory? he who slew

280

The rav'nous foe that gorg'd all human race!

The King of Glory he, whose glory fill'd

Heaven with amazement at his love to man,

And with divine complacency beheld

Powers most illumin'd wilder'd in the theme.

285

The theme, the joy, how then shall man sustain?

Oh, the burst gates, crush'd sting, demolish'd throne,

Last gasp of vanquish'd Death! Shout, earth and heaven,

This sum of good to man, whose nature then

Took wing, and mounted with him from the tomb!

Then, then, I rose; then first humanity

291

Triumphant past the crystal ports of light,

(Stupendous guest!) and seiz'd eternal youth,

Seiz'd in our name. E'er since 'tis blasphemous

To call man mortal. Man's mortality

295

Was then transferr'd to death: and heaven's duration

Unalienably seal'd to this frail frame,

This child of dust. Man, all-immortal, hail!

Hail Heaven ! all lavish of strange gifts to man !
Thine all the glory, man's the boundless bliss. 300

Where am I rapt by this triumphant theme,
On Christian Joy's exulting wing, above
Th' Aonian mount !—Alas ! small cause for joy !
What if to pain immortal ? if extent
Of being, to preclude a close of woe ? 305

Where, then, my boast of immortality ?
I boast it still, tho' cover'd o'er with guilt :
For guilt, not innocence, his life he pour'd ;
'Tis guilt alone can justify his death ;
Nor that, unless his death can justify 310
Relenting guilt in heaven's indulgent sight.

If, sick of folly, I relent, he writes
My name in heaven with that inverted spear
(A spear deep-dipt in blood !) which pierc'd his side,
And open'd there a font for all mankind, 315
Who strive, who combat crimes, to drink and live :
This, only this, subdues the fear of death.

And what is this ?—Survey the wondrous cure,
And at each step let higher wonder rise !
“ Pardon for infinite offence ! and pardon 320
“ Thro' means that speak its value infinite !
“ A pardon bought with blood ! with blood divine !
“ With blood divine of him I made my foe !
“ Persisted to provoke, tho' woo'd and aw'd !
“ Bless'd, and chastis'd, a flagrant rebel still ! 325
“ A rebel 'midst the thunders of his throne !
“ Nor I alone ; a rebel universe !
“ My species up in arms ! not one exempt !
“ Yet for the foulest of the foul he dies,
“ Most joy'd for the redeem'd from deepest guilt ! 330
“ As if our race were held of highest rank,
“ And Godhead dearer, as more kind to man !”

Bound ev'ry heart, and ev'ry bosom burn !
Oh what a scale of miracles is here !
Its lowest round high planted on the skies, 335
Its towering summit lost beyond the thought
Of man or angel ! Oh that I could climb
The wonderful ascent with equal praise.

Praise, flow for ever! (if astonishment
Will give thee leave) my praise for ever flow; 340
Praise ardent, cordial, constant; to high heaven
More fragrant than Arabia sacrific'd,
And all her spicy mountains in a flame.

So dear, so due to heaven, shall Praise descend,
With her soft plume, (from plausive angels' wing
First pluck'd by man) to tickle mortal ears, 345
Thus diving in the pockets of the great?

Is praise the perquisite of ev'ry paw,
Though black as hell, that grapples well for gold?
Oh love of gold! thou meanest of amours!
Shall Praise her odours waste on virtues dead; 350

Embalm the base; perfume the stench of guilt;
Earn dirty bread by washing Ethiops fair;
Removing filth, or sinking it from sight;
A scavenger in scenes where vacant posts, 355
Like gibbets yet untenanted, expect

Their future ornaments? From courts and thrones
Return, apostate Praise, thou vagabond!

Thou prostitute! to thy first love return,
Thy first, thy greatest, once unrivall'd theme. 360

There flow redundant, like Meander flow,
Back to thy fountain, to that parent power
Who gives the tongue to sound, the thought to soar,
The soul to be. Men homage pay to men,
Thoughtless beneath whose dreadful eye they bow,
In mutual awe profound, of clay to clay, 366

Of guilt to guilt, and turn their backs on thee,
Great Sire! whom thrones celestial ceaseless sing,
To prostrate angels an amazing scene!

O the presumption of man's awe for man!— 370

Man's Author! End! Restorer! Law! and Judge!
Thine all; day thine, and thine this gloom of night,

With all her wealth, with all her radiant world:

What night eternal but a frown from thee?

What heaven's meridian glory but thy smile? 375

And shall not praise be thine, not human praise,

While heaven's high host on hallelujah's live?

O may I breathe no longer than I breathe

My soul in praise to him who gave my soul,
 And all her infinite of prospect fair, 380
 Cut through the shades of hell, great Love! by thee,
 Oh most adorable! most unador'd!
 Where shall that praise begin which ne'er should end?
 Where'er I turn, what claim on all applause!
 How is Night's sable mantle labour'd o'er, 385
 How richly wrought with attributes divine!
 What wisdom shines! what love! This midnight pomp,
 This gorgeous arch, with golden worlds inlaid!
 Built with divine ambition! nought to thee;
 For others this profusion. Thou apart, 390
 Above! beyond! Oh tell me, mighty Mind!
 Where art thou? Shall I dive into the deep?
 Call to the sun? or ask the roaring winds
 For their Creator? shall I question loud
 The thunder, if in that th' Almighty dwells? 395
 Or holds he furious storms in straiten'd reins,
 And bids fierce whirlwinds wheel his rapid car?
 What mean these questions?—Trembling I retract;
 My prostrate soul adores the present God.
 Praise I a distant Deity? he tunes 400
 My voice (if tun'd;) the nerve that writes sustains:
 Wrapp'd in his being, I resound his praise:
 But tho' past all diffus'd, without a shore
 His essence, local is his throne, (as meet)
 To gather the dispers'd (as standards call 405
 The list'd from afar;) to fix a point,
 A central point, collective of his sons,
 Since finite ev'ry nature but his own.
 The nameless He, whose nod is Nature's birth,
 And Nature's shield the shadow of his hand; 410
 Her dissolution his suspended smile!
 The great First-Last! pavilion'd high he sits
 In darkness from excessive splendour borne,
 By gods unseen, unless through lustre lost.
 His glory, to created glory, bright 415
 As that to central horrors: he looks down
 On all that soars, and spans immensity.
 Tho' night unnumber'd worlds unfolds to view,

Boundless creation! what art thou? a beam,
A mere effluvium of his majesty.

420

And shall an atom of this atom world
Mutter, in dust and sin, the theme of heaven?
Down to the centre should I send my thought,
Through beds of glitt'ring ore and glowing gems,
Their beggar'd blaze wants lustre for my lay;
Goes out in darkness: if, on tow'ring wing,
I send it through the boundless vault of stars,
(The stars, though rich, what drops their gold to thee,
Great! good! wise! wonderful! eternal King!)

If to those conscious stars thy throne around,
Praise ever pouring, and imbibing bliss,
And ask their strain: they want it, more they want,
Poor their abundance; humble their sublime;
Languid their energy; their ardour cold;
Indebted still, their highest rapture burns
Short of its mark, defective, though divine.

425

430

435

Still more—this theme is man's, and man's alone;
Their vast appointments reach it not; they see
On earth a bounty not indulg'd on high,
And downward look for heaven's superior praise!
First-born of Ether! high in fields of light!
View man, to see the glory of your God!
Could angels envy, they had envied here:
And some did envy; and the rest, though gods,
Yet still gods unredeem'd, (there triumphs man,
Tempted to weigh the dust against the skies)
They less would feel, though more adorn my theme.
They sung creation (for in that they shar'd)
How rose in melody that child of Love!
Creation's great superior, man! is thine;
Thine is redemption; they just gave the key;
'Tis thine to raise and eternize the song,
Tho' human, yet divine; for should not this
Raise man o'er man, and kindle seraphs here?
Redemption! 'twas creation more sublime;
Redemption! 'twas the labour of the skies;
Far more than labour—it was death in heaven.
A truth so strange, 'twere bold to think it true,

440

445

450

455

If not far bolder still to disbelieve. 459
 Here pause and ponder. Was there death in heaven?
 What then on earth? On earth, which struck the blow?
 Who struck it? Who? O now is man enlarg'd,
 Seen thro' this medium, how the pigmy tow'rs!
 How counterpois'd his origin from dust!
 How counterpois'd to dust his sad return! 465
 How voided his vast distance from the skies!
 How near he presses on the seraph's wing!
 Which is the seraph? which the born of clay?
 How this demonstrates, through the thickest cloud
 Of guilt and clay condens'd, the son of heaven! 470
 The double son; the made, and the re-made!
 And shall heaven's double property be lost?
 Man's double madness only can destroy.
 To man the bleeding cross has promis'd all;
 The bleeding cross has sworn eternal grace. 475
 Who gave his life, what grace shall he deny?
 O ye! who from this rock of ages leap
 Apostates, plunging headlong in the deep!
 What cordial joy, what consolation strong,
 Whatever winds arise, or billows roll, 480
 Our int'rest in the Master of the storm:
 Cling there, and in wreck'd Nature's ruins smile,
 While vile apostates tremble in a calm.
 Man! know thyself; all wisdom centres there.
 To none man seems ignoble but to man. 485
 Angels that grandeur men o'erlook admire:
 How long shall human nature be their book,
 Degen'rate mortal, and unread by thee?
 The beam dim reason sheds shews wonders there:
 What high contents! illustrious faculties! 490
 But the grand comment, which displays at full
 Our human height, scarce sever'd from divine,
 By heaven compos'd, was publish'd on the cross.
 Who looks on that, and sees not in himself
 An awful stranger, a terrestrial god? 495
 A glorious partner with the Deity
 In that high attribute, immortal life?
 If a God bleeds, he bleeds not for a worm.

I gaze, and as I gaze my mounting soul
 Catches strange fire, Eternity, at thee, 500
 And drops the world—or, rather, more enjoys.
 How chang'd the face of Nature! how improv'd!
 What seem'd a chaos shines a glorious world,
 Or what a world an Eden; heighten'd all!
 It is another scene! another self! 505
 And still another, as time rolls along,
 And that a self far more illustrious still.
 Beyond long ages, yet roll'd up in shades,
 Unpierc'd by bold Conjecture's keenest ray,
 What evolutions of surprising Fate! 510
 How Nature opens, and receives my soul
 In boundless walks of raptur'd thought! where gods
 Encounter and embrace me! What new births
 Of strange adventure, foreign to the sun,
 Where what now charms, perhaps whate'er exists,
 Old time, and fair creation, are forgot! 516
 Is this extravagant? of man we form,
 Extravagant conception to be just:
 Conception unconfin'd wants wings to reach him;
 Beyond its reach the Godhead only more. 520
 He, the great Father! kindled at one flame
 The world of rationals; one spirit pour'd
 From spirit's awful fountain; pour'd himself
 Through all their souls, but not in equal stream,
 Profuse, or frugal, of th' inspiring God, 525
 As his wise plan demanded; and when past
 Their various trials, in their various spheres,
 If they continue rational, as made,
 Resorbs them all into himself again, 529
 His throne their centre, and his smile their crown.
 Why doubt we, then, the glorious truth to sing,
 Tho' yet unsung, as deem'd, perhaps, too bold?
 Angels are men of a superior kind;
 Angels are men in lighter habit clad,
 High o'er celestial mountains wing'd in flight; 335
 And men are angels, loaded for an hour,
 Who wade this miry vale, and climb with pain,
 And slipp'ry step, the bottom of the steep.

Angels their failings, mortals have their praise :
 While here, of corps ethereal, such enroll'd 540
 And summon'd to the glorious standard soon,
 Which flames eternal crimson through the skies ;
 Nor are our brothers thoughtless of their kin,
 Yet absent ; but not absent from their love.
 Michael has fought our battles ; Raphael sung 545
 Our triumphs ; Gabriel on our errands flown,
 Sent by the Sov'reign : and are these, O man !
 Thy friends, thy warm allies ? and thou (shame burn
 The cheek to cinder !) rival to the brute ?

Religion's all. Descending from the skies 550
 To wretched man, the goddess in her left
 Holds out this world, and in her right the next.
 Religion ! the sole voucher man is man ;
 Supporter sole of man above himself ;
 E'en in this night of frailty, change, and death, 555
 She gives the soul a soul that acts a god.
 Religion ! providence ! an after state !
 Here is firm footing ; here is solid rock ;
 This can support us ; all is sea besides ;
 Sinks under us ; bestorms, and then devours. 560
 His hand the good man fastens on the skies,
 And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.

As when a wretch, from thick polluted air,
 Darkness, and stench, and suffocating damps,
 And dungeon horrors, by kind Fate discharg'd, 565
 Climbs some fair eminence, where ether pure
 Surrounds him, and Elysian prospects rise,
 His heart exults, his spirits cast their load ;
 As if new-born, he triumphs in the change :
 So joys the soul, when from inglorious aims 570
 And sordid sweets, from feculence and froth
 Of ties terrestrial, set at large, she mounts
 To Reason's region, her own element,
 Breathes hopes immortal, and affects the skies.

Religion ! thou, the soul of happiness, 575
 And, groaning Calvary, of thee ! There shine
 The noblest truths ; there strongest motives sting ;
 There sacred violence assaults the soul

There nothing but compulsion is forborne.

Can love allure us? or can terror awe?

580

He weeps!—the falling drop puts out the sun.

He sighs!—the sigh earth's deep foundation shakes.

If in his love so terrible, what then

His wrath inflam'd? his tenderness on fire?

Like soft, smooth oil, outblazing other fires?

585

Can pray'r, can praise, avert it?—Thou, my all!

My theme! my inspiration! and my crown!

My strength in age! my rise in low estate!

My soul's ambition! pleasure, wealth!—my world!

My light in darkness! and my life in death!

590

My boast thro' time! bliss thro' eternity!

Eternity, too short to speak thy praise,

Or fathom thy profound of love to man!

To man of men the meanest, e'en to me!

My sacrifice! my God!—what things are these! 595

What then art thou? by what name shall I call thee?

Knew I the name devout archangels use,

Devout archangels should the name enjoy,

By me unrivall'd; thousands more sublime,

None half so dear as that which, tho' unspoke,

600

Still glows at heart. O how Omnipotence

Is lost in love! thou great philanthropist!

Father of angels! but the friend of man!

Like Jacob, fondest of the younger born!

Thou who didst save him, snatch the smoking brand 605

From out the flames, and quench it in thy blood!

How art thou pleas'd, by bounty to distress!

To make us groan beneath our gratitude,

Too big for birth! to favour, and confound;

To challenge, and to distance all return!

610

Of lavish love stupendous heights to soar,

And leave praise panting in the distant vale!

Thy right, too great, defrauds thee of thy due;

And sacrilegious our sublimest song.

But since the naked will obtains thy smile,

615

Beneath this monument of praise unpaid,

And future life symphonious to my strain,

(That noblest hymn to heaven!) for ever lie

Entomb'd my fear of death ! and ev'ry fear,
The dread of ev'ry evil, but thy frown. 620

Whom see I yonder, so demurely smile ?
Laughter a labour, and might break their rest.
Ye Quietists, in homage to the skies !
Serene ! of soft address ! who mildly make
An unobtrusive tender of your hearts, 625
Abhorring violence ! who halt indeed ;
But, for the blessing, wrestle not with heaven !
Think you my song too turbulent ? too warm ?
Are passions, then, the pagans of the soul !
Reason alone baptiz'd ? alone ordain'd 630
To touch things sacred ? O for warmer still !
Guilt chills my zeal, and age benumbs my powers ;
Oh for an humble heart ! and prouder song !
Thou, my much injur'd theme ! with that soft eye
Which melted o'er doom'd Salem, deign to look 635
Compassion to the coldness of my breast ;
And pardon to the winter in my strain.

Oh ye cold-hearted, frozen, Formalists !
On such a theme, 'tis impious to be calm ;
Passion is reason, transport temper, here. 640
Shall heaven, which gave us ardour, and has shone
Her own for man so strongly, not disdain
What smooth emollients in theology,
Recumbent virtue's downy doctors, preach ;
That prose of piety, a lukewarm praise ? 645
Rise odours sweet from incense uninflam'd ?
Devotion, when lukewarm, is undevout ;
But, when it glows, its heat is struck to heaven ;
To human hearts her golden harps are strung :
High heaven's orchestra chaunts amen to man. 650

Hear I, or dream I hear, their distant strain,
Sweet to the soul, and tasting strong of heaven,
Soft wafted on celestial Pity's plume,
Through the vast spaces of the universe,
To cheer me in this melancholy gloom ? 655
Or when will Death, (now stingless,) like a friend,
Admit me of their choir ? O when will Death
This mouldering, old, partition-wall throw down ?

Give beings, one in nature, one abode?

Oh Death divine! that giv'st us to the skies! 660

Great future! glorious patron of the past,
And present! when shall I thy shrine adore?

From Nature's continent, immensely wide,

Immensely blest, this little isle of life,

This dark, incarcerated colony, 665

Divides us. Happy day! that breaks our chain;

That manumits; that calls from exile home;

That leads to Nature's great metropolis,

And re-admits us through the guardian hand

Of elder brothers, to our father's throne; 670

Who hears our advocate, and, thro' his wounds

Beholding man, allows that tender name.

'Tis this makes christian triumph a command:

'Tis this makes joy a duty to the wise;

'Tis impious in a good man to be sad. 675

See thou, Lorenzo! where hangs all our hope?

Touch'd by the cross, we live; or, more than die;

That touch which touch'd not angels; more divine

Than that which touch'd confusion into form,

And darkness into glory; partial touch! 680

Ineffable pre-eminent regard!

Sacred to man, and sovereign through the whole

Long golden chain of miracles, which hangs

From heaven through all duration, and supports

In one illustrious and amazing plan, 685

Thy welfare, Nature! and thy God's renown.

That touch, with charm celestial, heals the soul

Diseas'd, drives pain from guilt, lights life in death,

Turns earth to heaven, to heavenly thrones transforms

The ghastly ruins of the mouldering tomb. 690

Dost ask me when? When he who dy'd returns;

Returns, how chang'd! Where then the man of woe?

In glory's terrors all the Godhead burns:

And all his courts, exhausted by the tide

Of deities triumphant in his train, 695

Leave a stupendous solitude in heaven;

Replenish'd soon, replenish'd with increase

Of pomp, and multitude ; a radiant band
Of angels new ; of angels from the tomb.

Is this by fancy thrown remote ? and rise
Dark doubts between the promise and event ? 700

I send thee not to volumes for thy cure ;
Read Nature ! Nature is a friend to truth ;
Nature is christian ; preaches to mankind ;
And bids dead matter aid us in our creed. 705

Hast thou ne'er seen the comets flaming flight ?
Th' illustrious stranger passing, terror sheds
On gazing nations ; from his fiery train
Of length enormous, takes his ample round
Thro' depths of ether ; coasts unnumber'd worlds, 710
Of more than solar glory ; doubles wide
Heaven's mighty cape ; and then revisits earth,
From the long travel of a thousand years.

Thus, at the destin'd period, shall return
He, once on earth, who bids the comet blaze ; 715
And, with him, all our triumph o'er the tomb.

Nature is dumb on this important point ;
Or hope precarious in low whisper breathes ;
Faith speaks aloud, distinct ; e'en adders hear ;
But turn, and dart into the dark again. 720

Faith builds a bridge across the gulph of death,
To break the shock blind Nature cannot shun,
And lands thought smoothly on the farther shore.
Death's terror is the mountain Faith removes ;
That mountain barrier between man and peace. 725

'Tis Faith disarms Destruction ; and absolves
From every clam'rous charge, the guiltless tomb.

Why disbelieve ? Lorenzo !—" Reason bids,
" All-sacred reason."—Hold her sacred still ;
Nor shalt thou want a rival in thy flame : 730

All-sacred Reason ! source, and soul, of all
Demanding praise, on earth, or earth above !
My heart is thine : deep in its inmost folds,
Live thou with life ; life dearer of the two.

Wear I the blessed cross, by Fortune stamp'd 735
On passive Nature before Thought was born ?
My birth's blind bigot ! fir'd with local zeal !

No ; Reason re-baptiz'd me when adult ;
Weigh'd true, and false, in her impartial scale ;
My heart became the convert of my head, 740
And made that choice, which once was but my fate.

“ On argument alone my faith is built ;”
Reason pursu'd is Faith ; and, unpursu'd
Where proof invites, 'tis reason, then, no more :
And such our proof, that, or our faith is right, 745

Or Reason lies, and heaven design'd it wrong :
Absolve we this ? What, then, is blasphemy !

Fond as we are, and justly fond, of Faith,
Reason, we grant demands our first regard ;
The mother honour'd, as the daughter dear. 750
Reason the root, fair Faith is but the flower ;
The fading flower shall die ; but Reason lives
Immortal, as her father in the skies.

When Faith is virtue, Reason makes it so.

Wrong not the christian ; think not Reason yours ;
'Tis Reason our great master holds so dear ; 756

'Tis Reason's injur'd rights his wrath resents ;

'Tis Reason's voice obey'd his glories crown ;

To give lost Reason life he pour'd his own :

Believe, and show the reason of a man ; 760

Believe, and taste the pleasure of a God ;

Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb :

Through Reason's wounds alone thy faith can die ;

Which dying, tenfold terror gives to death,

And dips in venom his twice-mortal sting. 765

Learn hence what honours, what loud pæans, due
To those, who push our antidote aside ;

Those boasted friends to reason, and to man,

Whose fatal love stabs every joy, and leaves

Death's terror heighten'd, gnawing on his heart. 770

These pompous sons of Reason idoliz'd

And vilified at once ; of Reason dead,

Then deify'd, as monarch's were of old ;

What conduct plants proud laurels on their brow ?

While love of truth through all their camp resounds,

They draw pride's curtain o'er the noon-tide ray, 776

Spike up their inch of reason, on the point

Of philosophic wit, call'd argument ;
 And then, exulting on their taper, cry,
 " Behold the sun : " and, Indian-like, adore. 780

Talk they of morals ? O thou bleeding love !
 Thou maker of new morals to mankind !
 The grand morality is love of thee.
 As wise as Socrates, if such they were,
 (Nor will they 'bait of that sublime renown) 785
 As wise as Socrates, might justly stand
 The definition of a modern fool.

A christian is the highest style of man :
 And is there, who the blessed cross wipes off,
 As a foul blot from his dishonour'd brow ? 790

If angels tremble, 'tis at such a sight :
 The wretch they quit, desponding of their charge,
 More struck with grief or wonder, who can tell ?

Ye fold to sense ! ye citizens of earth !
 (For such alone the christian banner fly) 795

Know ye how wise your choice, how great your gain ?
 Behold the picture of earth's happiest man :
 " He calls his wish, it comes ; he sends it back,
 " And says, he call'd another ; that arrives,
 " Meets the same welcome ; yet he still calls on ; 800
 " Till one calls him, who varies not his call,
 " But holds him fast, in chains of darkness bound,
 " Till Nature dies, and judgment sets him free ;
 " A freedom far less welcome than his chain."

But grant man happy ; grant him happy long ;
 Add to life's highest prize her latest hour,
 That hour, so late, is nimble in approach,
 That, like a post, comes on in full career :
 How swift the shuttle flies, that weaves thy shroud !
 Where is the fable of thy former years ! 810

Thrown down the gulf of time ; as far from thee
 As they had ne'er been thine ; the day in hand,
 Like a bird struggling to get loose, is going ;
 Scarce now possess'd, so suddenly 'tis gone ;
 And each swift moment fled, is death advanc'd 815
 By strides as swift : eternity is all ;
 And whose eternity ? Who triumphs there ?

Bathing for ever in the font of bliss !

For ever basking in the deity !

Lorenzo ! who ?—Thy conscience shall reply. 820

O give it leave to speak ; 'twill speak e'er long,

Thy leave unask'd : Lorenzo ! hear it now,

While useful its advice, its accent mild,

By the great edict, the divine decree,

Truth is deposited with man's last hour ; 825

An honest hour, and faithful to her trust ;

Truth, eldest daughter of the deity ;

Truth, of his counsel when he made the worlds ;

Nor less, when he shall judge the worlds he made ;

Though silent long, and sleeping ne'er so sound, 830

Smother'd with errors, and oppress'd with toys,

That heaven commission'd hour no sooner calls,

But, from her cavern in the soul's abyss,

Like him they fable under *Ætna* whelm'd,

The goddess, bursts in thunder, and in flame ; 835

Loudly convinces, and severely pains.

Dark dæmons I discharge, and *Hydra* stings ;

The keen vibration of bright truth—is hell :

Just definition ! though by schools untaught.

Ye deaf to truth ! peruse this parson'd page, 840

And trust, for once, a prophet and a priest ;

“ Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die.”

THE COMPLAINT.

NIGHT V.

THE RELAPSE.

Humbly inscribed to

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF LITCHFIELD.

LORENZO ! to recriminate is just.

Fondness for fame is avarice of air.

I grant the man is vain who writes for praise.

Praise no man e'er deserv'd, who sought no more.

As just thy second charge. I grant the muse 5

Has often blush'd at her degenerate sons,

Retain'd by sense to plead her filthy cause ;

To raise the low, to magnify the mean,

And subtilize the gross into refin'd :
As if to magic numbers' powerful charm
'Twas given to make a civet of their song
Obscene, and sweeten ordure to perfume.
Wit, a true pagan, deifies the brute,
And lifts our swine enjoyments from the mire.

The fact notorious, not obscure the cause. 15
We wear the chains of pleasure and of pride.
These share the man ; and these distract him too ;
Draw different ways, and clash in their commands.
Pride, like an eagle, builds among the stars ;
But pleasure, lark-like, nests upon the ground. 20
Joys shar'd by brute-creation, pride resents ;
Pleasure embraces : man would both enjoy,
And both at once : a point how hard to gain !
But, what can't wit, when stung by strong desire ?

Wit dares attempt this arduous enterprize. 25
Since joys of sense can't rise to Reason's taste ;
In subtle Sophistry's laborious forge,
Wit hammers out a reason new, that stoops
The sordid scenes, and meets them with applause.
Wit calls the Graces the chaste zone to loose ; 30
Nor less than a plump god to fill the bowl :
A thousand phantoms, and a thousand spells,
A thousand opiates scatters, to delude,
To fascinate, inebriate, lay asleep,
And the fool'd mind delightfully confound. 35
Thus that which shock'd the judgment, shocks no more ;
That which gave Pride offence, no more offends.
Pleasure and Pride, by nature mortal foes,
At war eternal, which in man shall reign,
By Wits address, patch up a fatal peace, 40
And hand in hand lead on the rank debauch,
From rank, refin'd to delicate and gay.
Art, cursed Art ! wipes of th' indebted blush
From Nature's cheek, and bronzes every shame.
Man smiles in ruin, glories in his guilt, 45
And Infamy stands candidate for Praise.

All writ by man in favour of the soul,
These sensual ethics far, in bulk, transcend.

The flow'rs of eloquence, profusely pour'd
O'er spotted vice, fill half the letter'd world. 50
Can pow'rs of genius exercise their page,
And consecrate enormities with song?

But let not these inexpiable strains
Condemn the muse that knows her dignity;
Nor meanly stops at time, but holds the world 55
As 'tis, in Nature's ample field, a point,
A point in her esteem; from whence to start,
And run the round of universal space,
To visit being universal there,
And being's source, that utmost flight of mind! 60
Yet, spite of this so vast circumference,
Well knows, but what is moral, nought is great.
Sing syrens only? Do not angels sing?
There is in Poesy a decent pride,
Which well becomes her when she speaks to Prose, 65
Her younger sister; haply, not more wise.

Think'st thou, Lorenzo! to find pastimes here?
No guilty passion blown into a flame,
No foible flatter'd, dignity disgrac'd,
No fairy field of fiction, all on flower, 70
No rainbow colours, here, or filken tale:
But solemn counsels, images of awe,
Truths, which eternity lets fall on man
With double weight, thro' these revolving spheres,
This death-deep silence, and incumbent shade: 75
Thoughts, such as shall revisit your last hour;
Visit uncall'd, and live when life expires;
And thy dark pencil, midnight! darker still
In melancholy dipp'd, embrowns the whole.

Yet this, even this, my laughter-loving friends! 80
Lorenzo! and thy brothers of the smile!
If, what imports you must, can most engage,
Shall steal your ear, and chain you to my song.
Or if you fail me, know the wise shall taste
The truths I sing; the truths I sing shall feel; 85
And, feeling, give assent! and their assent
Is ample recompense; is more than praise.
But chiefly thine, O Litchfield! nor mistake;

Think not un introduc'd I force my way ;
 Narcissa, not unknown, not unall'y'd, 90
 By virtue, or by blood, illustrious youth !
 To thee, from blooming amaranthine bowers,
 Where all the language harmony, descends
 Uncall'd, and asks admittance for the muse :
 A muse that will not pain thee with thy praise ; 95
 Thy praise she drops, by nobler still inspir'd.

O thou ! blest Spirit ! whether the supreme,
 Great antemundane Father ! in whose breast
 Embryo creation, unborn being, dwelt,
 And all its various revolutions roll'd 100
 Present, though future ; prior to themselves ;
 Whose breath can blow it into naught again ;
 Or from whose throne some delegated pow'r,
 Who, studious of our peace, dost turn the thought
 From vain and vile, to solid and sublime ! 105
 Unseen thou lead'st me to delicious draughts
 Of inspiration, from a purer stream,
 And fuller of the god, than that which burst
 From fam'd Castalia : nor is yet allay'd
 My sacred thirst ; though long my soul has rang'd 110
 Through pleasing paths of moral and divine,
 By thee sustain'd, and lighted by the stars.

By them best lighted are the paths of thought ;
 Nights are their days, their most illumin'd hours.
 By day, the soul, o'erborne by life's career, 115
 Stunn'd by the din, and giddy with the glare,
 Reels far from reason, jostled by the throng.
 By day the soul is passive, all her thoughts
 Impos'd, precarious, broken ere mature.
 By night, from objects free, from passion cool, 120
 Thoughts uncontroll'd, and unimpres'd, the births
 Of pure election, arbitrary range,
 Not to the limits of one world confin'd ;
 But from ethereal travels light on earth,
 As voyagers drop anchor, for repose. 125

Let Indians, and the gay, like Indians, fond
 Of feather'd fopperies, the sun adore :
 Darkness has more divinity for me ;

It strikes thought inward ; it drives back the soul
To settle on herself, our point supreme ! 130

There lies our theatre ! there sits our judge,
Darkness the curtain drops o'er life's dull scene ?
'Tis the kind hand of Providence stretch'd out
'Twixt man and vanity ; 'tis Reason's reign,
And Virtue's too ; these tutelary shades 135
Are man's asylum from the tainted throng.

Night is the good man's friend, and guardian too ;
It no less rescues virtue, than inspires.

Virtue, for ever frail, as fair, below,
Her tender nature suffers in the crowd, 140

Nor touches on the world, without a stain :
The world's infectious ; few bring back at eve,
Immaculate, the manners of the morn.

Something we thought, is blotted ; we resolved,
Is shaken ; we renounc'd, returns again. 145

Each salutation may slide in a sin
Unthought before, or fix a former flaw.

Nor is it strange : light, motion, concourse, noise,
All, scatter us abroad ; thought outward bound,
Neglectful of our home affairs, flies off 150

In fume and dissipation, quits her charge,
And leaves the breast unguarded to the foe.

Present example gets within our guard,
And acts with double force, by few repell'd.
Ambition fires ambition ; love of gain 155

Strikes, like a pestilence, from breast to breast ;

Riot, pride, perfidy, blue vapours breathe ;

And inhumanity is caught from man,

From smiling man. A flight, a single glance,
And shot at random, often has brought home 160

A sudden fever to the throbbing heart,

Of envy, rancour, or impure desire.

We see, we hear, with peril ; safety dwells

Remote from multitude ; the world's a school
Of wrong, and what proficients swarm around ! 165

We must, or imitate, or disapprove ;

Must list as their accomplices, or foes ;

That stains our innocence ; this wounds our peace.

From Nature's birth, hence, wisdom has been smit
With sweet recess, and languish'd for the shade. 170
This sacred shade, and solitude, what is it?
'Tis the felt presence of the deity.

Few are the faults we flatter when alone,
Vice sinks in her allurements, is ungilt,
And looks, like other objects, black by night. 175
By night an atheist half-believes a God.

Night is fair Virtue's immemorial friend;
The conscious moon, through every distant age,
Has held a lamp to Wisdom, and let fall,
On Contemplation's eye, her purging ray. 180
The fam'd Athenian, he who woo'd from heaven
Philosophy the fair, to dwell with men,
And form their manners, not inflame their pride,
While o'er his head, as fearful to molest
His labouring mind, the stars in silence slide, 185
And seem all gazing on their future guest,
See him soliciting his ardent suit

In private audience: all the live-long night;
Rigid in thought, and motionless, he stands;
Nor quits his theme, or posture, till the sun 190
(Rude drunkard rising rosy from the main;)
Disturbs his noble intellectual beam,
And gives him to the tumult of the world.

Hail, precious moments! stol'n from the black waste
Of murder'd time! Auspicious midnight! hail! 195
The world excluded, every passion hush,
And open'd a calm intercourse with heaven,
Here the soul sits in council; ponders past,
Predestines future action; sees, not feels,
Tumultuous life, and reasons with the storm; 200
All her lies answers, and thinks down her charms.

What awful joy! what mental liberty!
I am not pent in darkness; rather say,
(If not too bold) in darkness I'm embower'd.
Delightful gloom! the clustering thoughts around 205
Spontaneous rise, and blossom in the shade;
But droop by day, and sicken in the sun.

Thought borrows life elsewhere ; from that first fire,
Fountain of animation ! whence descends

Urania, my celestial guest, who deigns 210

Nightly to visit me, so mean ; and now,
Conscious how needful discipline to man,
From pleasing dalliance with the charms of night,
My wand'ring thought recalls, to what excites
Far other beat of heart, Narcissa's tomb, 215

Or is it feeble Nature calls me back,
And breaks my spirit into grief again ?

Is it a Stygian vapour in my blood ?

A cold slow puddle creeping thro' my veins ?

Or is it thus with all men ?—Thus with all. 220

What are we ? how unequal ! now we soar,
And now we sink. To be the same transcends

Our present prowess. Dearly pays the soul
For lodging ill ; too dearly rents her clay.

Reason, a baffled counsellor, but adds 225

The blush of weakness to the bane of woe.

The noblest spirit, fighting her hard fate

In this damp, dusty region, charg'd with storms,

But feebly flutters, yet untaught to fly ;

Or, flying, short her flight, and sure her fall : 230

Our utmost strength, when down, to rise again ;

And not to yield, tho' beaten, all our praise.

'Tis vain to seek in men for more than man.

Tho' proud in promise, big in previous thought,

Experience damps our triumph. I, who late 235

Emerging from the shadows of the grave,

Where grief detain'd me pris'ner, mounting high,

Threw wide the gates of everlasting day,

And call'd mankind to glory, shook off pain,

Mortality shook off, in ether pure, 240

And struck the stars, now feel my spirits fail ;

They drop me from the zenith ; down I rush,

Like him whom fable fledg'd with waxen wings,

In sorrow drown'd—but not in sorrow lost.

How wretched is the man who never mourn'd ! 245

I dive for precious pearl in Sorrow's stream :

Not so the thoughtless man that only grieves,

Takes all the torment, and rejects the gain,
(Inestimable gain) and gives heaven leave
To make him but more wretched, not more wise. 250

If wisdom is our lesson (and what else
Ennobles man? what else have angels learn'd?)
Grief! more proficient in thy school are made,
'Than Genius or proud Learning e'er could boast.
Voracious Learning, often over-fed, 255
Digests not into sense her motley meal.

This bookcase, with dark booty almost burst,
This forager on others' wisdom, leaves
Her native farm, her reason, quite untill'd;
With mixt manure she surfeits the rank soil, 260
Dung'd, but not drest, and rich to beggary:
A pomp untameable of weeds prevails:
Her servant's wealth incumber'd Wisdom mourns.

And what says Genius? "Let the dull be wise."
Genius, too hard for right, can prove it wrong, 265
And loves to boast, where blush men less inspir'd.
It pleads exemption from the laws of sense,
Considers reason as a leveller,
And scorns to share a blessing with the crowd.
That wise it could be, thinks an ample claim 270
To glory, and to pleasure gives the rest.
Crassus but sleeps, Ardelio is undone.
Wisdom less shudders at a fool than wit.

But Wisdom smiles, when humbled mortals weep.
When Sorrow wounds the breast, as ploughs the glebe,
And hearts obdurate feel her soft'ning shower; 276
Her seed, celestial, then glad Wisdom sows;
Her golden harvest triumphs in the soil.
If so, Narcissa, welcome my relapse;
I'll raise a tax on my calamity, 280
And reap rich compensation from my pain.
I'll range the plenteous intellectual field,
And gather ev'ry thought of sov'reign power
To chase the moral maladies of man;
Thoughts which may bear transplanting to the skies,
Tho' natives of this coarse penurious soil; 286
Nor wholly wither there, where seraphs sing,

Refin'd, exalted, not annull'd, in heaven :
 Reason, the sun that gives them birth, the same
 In either clime, tho' more illustrious there. 290
 These choicely cull'd, and elegantly rang'd,
 Shall form a garland for Narcissa's tomb,
 And, peradventure, of no fading flowers.

Say, on what themes shall puzzled choice descend ?
 " The importance of contemplating the tomb ; 295
 " Why men decline it ; suicide's foul birth ;
 " The various kind of grief ; the faults of age ;
 " And death's dread character—invite my song."

And, first, the importance of our end survey'd.
 Friends counsel quick dismissal of our grief. 300
 Mistaken kindness ! our hearts heal too soon.
 Are they more kind than he who struck the blow ?
 Who bid it do his errand in our hearts,
 And banish peace till nobler guests arrive,
 And bring it back a true and endless peace ? 305
 Calamities are friends : as glaring day
 Of these unnumber'd lustres robs our sight,
 Prosperity puts out unnumber'd thoughts
 Of import high, and light divine to man.

The man how bless'd, who, sick of gaudy scenes,
 (Scenes apt to thrust between us and ourselves!) 311
 Is led by choice to take his fav'rite walk
 Beneath Death's gloomy, silent, cypress shades,
 Unpierc'd by Vanity's fantastic ray ;
 To read his monuments, to weigh his dust, 315
 Visit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs !
 Lorenzo ! read with me Narcissa's stone ;
 (Narcissa was thy fav'rite) let us read
 Her moral stone ; few doctors preach so well ;
 Few orators so tenderly can touch 320
 The feeling heart. What pathos in the date !
 Apt words can strike ; and yet in them we see
 Faint images of what we here enjoy.
 What cause have we to build on length of life ?
 Temptations seize, when fear is laid asleep. 325
 And ill foreboded is our strongest guard.

See from her tomb, as from an humbler shrine,
 Truth, radiant goddess, fallies on my soul,
 And puts Delusion's dusky train to flight;
 Dispels the mists our sultry passions raise, 330
 From objects low, terrestrial, and obscene,
 And shews the real estimate of things,
 Which no man, unafflicted, ever saw;
 Pulls off the veil from Virtue's rising charms;
 Detects temptation in a thousand lies. 335

Truth bids me look on men as autumn leaves,
 And all they bleed for as the summer's dust
 Driven by the whirlwind: lighted by her beams,
 I widen my horizon, gain new powers,
 See things invisible, feel things remote, 340
 Am present with futurities; think nought
 To man so foreign as the joys possess'd,
 Nought so much his as those beyond the grave.

No folly keeps its colour in her sight;
 Pale worldly Wisdom loses all her charms. 345
 In pompous promise from her schemes profound.
 If future fate she plans, 'tis all in leaves,
 Like Sibyl, unsubstantial, fleeting bliss!
 At the first blast it vanishes in air.
 Not so celestial. Wouldst thou know, Lorenzo, 350
 How differ worldly wisdom and divine?
 Just as the waning and the waxing moon.
 More empty worldly wisdom ev'ry day,
 And ev'ry day more fair her rival shines.
 When later, there's less time to play the fool. 355
 Soon our whole term for wisdom is expir'd,
 (Thou know'st she calls no council in the grave)
 And everlasting fool is writ in fire,
 Or real wisdom wafts us to the skies.

As worldly schemes resemble Sibyls' leaves, 360
 The good man's days to Sibyls' books compare,
 (In ancient story read, thou know'st the tale)
 In price still rising as in number less,
 Inestimable quite his final hour.
 For that who thrones can offer, offer thrones; 365
 Insolvent worlds the purchase cannot pay.

“ Oh let me die his death !” all Nature cries.

“ Then live his life.”—All Nature falters there ;

Our great phyfician daily to confult,

To commune with the grave our only cure. 370

What grave prefcribes the beft ?—A friend’s ; and yet
From a friend’s grave how foon we difengage !

E’en to the deareft, as his marble, cold.

Why are friends ravish’d from us ? ’tis to bind,
By foft Affection’s ties, on human hearts 575

The thought of death, which reason, too fupine,
Or mifemploy’d, fo rarely faftens there.

Nor reason nor affection, no, nor both

Combin’d, can break the witchcrafts of the world.

Behold th’ inexorable hour at hand ! 380

Behold th’ inexorable hour forgot !

And to forget it the chief aim of life,

Tho’ well to ponder it is life’s chief end.

Is death, that ever-threat’ning, ne’er remote,
That all-important, and that only fure, 385
(Come when he will) an unexpected gueft ?

Nay, tho’ invited by the loudeft calls

Of blind imprudence, unexpected ftill,

Tho’ num’rous meffengers are fent before,

To warn his great arrival ? What the caufe, 390

The wond’rous caufe of this mysterious ill ?

All heaven looks down astonish’d at the fight.

Is it that Life has fown her joys fo thick,

We can’t thruft in a fingle care between ?

Is it that Life has fuch a fwarm of cares, 395

The thought of death can’t enter for the throng ?

Is it that Time ftals on with downy feet,

Nor wakes Indulgence from her golden dream ?

To-day is fo like yefterday, it cheats ;

We take the lying fifter for the fame. 400

Life glides away, Lorenzo, like a brook,

For ever changing, unperceiv’d the change.

In the fame brook none ever bath’d him twice ;

To the fame life none ever twice awoke.

We call the brook the fame ; the fame we think 405

Our life, tho’ ftill more rapid in its flow

Nor mark the much irrevocably laps'd,
 And mingled with the sea. Or shall we say
 (Retaining still the brook to bear us on)
 That life is like a vessel on the stream? 410
 In life embark'd, we smoothly down the tide
 Of time descend, but not on time intent;
 Amus'd, unconscious of the gliding wave,
 Till on a sudden we perceive a shock;
 We start, awake, look out; what see we there? 415
 Our brittle bark is burst on Charon's shore.

Is this the cause death flies all human thought?
 Or is it judgment by the will struck blind,
 That domineering mistress of the soul!
 Like him so strong by Dalilah the fair? 420
 Or is it Fear turns startled Reason back,
 From looking down a precipice so steep?
 'Tis dreadful, and the dread is wisely plac'd
 By Nature, conscious of the make of man.
 A dreadful friend it is, a terror kind, 425
 A flaming sword to guard the tree of Life.
 By that unaw'd, in life's most smiling hour
 The good man would repine; would suffer joys,
 And burn impatient for his promis'd skies.
 The bad on each punctilious pique of pride, 430
 Or gloom of humour would give rage the rein,
 Bound o'er the barrier, rush into the dark,
 And mar the schemes of Providence below.

What groan was that, Lorenzo?—Furies! rise,
 And drown, in your less execrable yell, 435
 Britannia's shame. There took her gloomy flight,
 On wing impetuous, a black sullen soul,
 Blasted from hell, with horrid lust of death.
 Thy friend, the brave, the gallant Altamont,
 So call'd, so thought—and then he fled the field, 440
 Less base the fear of death than fear of life.
 O Britain! infamous for suicide!
 An island in thy manners! far disjoin'd
 From the whole world of rationals beside!
 In ambient waves plunge thy polluted head, 445
 Wash the dire stain, nor shock the continent.

But thou be shock'd while I detect the cause
 Of self-assault, expose the monster's birth,
 And bid Abhorrence hiss it round the world.
 Blame not thy clime, nor chide the distant sun; 450
 The sun is innocent, thy clime absolv'd.
 Immoral climes kind Nature never made.
 The cause I sing in Eden might prevail,
 And proves it is thy folly, not thy fate.

The soul of man (let man in homage bow 455
 Who names his soul) a native of the skies!
 High-born and free, her freedom should maintain,
 Unfold, unmortgag'd for earth's little bribes.
 Th' illustrious stranger, in this foreign land,
 Like strangers, jealous of her dignity, 460
 Studious of home, and ardent to return,
 Of earth suspicious earth's enchanted cup
 With cool reserve light touching, should indulge,
 On immortality, her godlike taste; 464
 There take large draughts; make her chief banquet there.

But some reject this sustenance divine,
 To beggarly vile appetites descend,
 Ask alms of earth for guests that came from heaven:
 Sink into slaves, and sell, for present hire,
 Their rich reversion, and (what shares its fate) 470
 Their native freedom to the prince who sways
 This nether world; and when his payments fail,
 When his foul basket gorges them no more,
 Or their pall'd palates loathe the basket full,
 Are instantly, with wild demoniac rage, 475
 For breaking all the chains of Providence,
 And bursting their confinement, tho' fast barr'd
 By laws divine and human, guarded strong
 With horrors doubled to defend the pass,
 The blackest nature or dire guilt can raise, 480
 And moated round with fathomless destruction,
 Sure to receive and overwhelm them in their fall.

Such, Britons! is the cause, to you unknown.
 Or, worse, o'erlook'd, o'erlook'd by magistrates,
 Thus criminals themselves. I grant the deed 485
 Is madness, but the madness of the heart.

And what is that? our utmost bound of guilt.
 A sensual unreflecting life is big
 With monstrous births, and suicide, to crown
 The black infernal brood. The bold to break 490
 Heaven's law supreme, and desperately rush
 Thro' sacred Nature's murder, on their own,
 Because they never think of death, they die.
 'Tis equally man's duty, glory, gain,
 At once to shun and meditate his end. 495
 When by the bed of languishment we sit,
 (The seat of wisdom! if our choice, not fate)
 Or o'er our dying friends in anguish hang,
 Wipe the cold dew, or stay the sinking head,
 Number their moments, and in ev'ry clock 500
 Start at the voice of an eternity;
 See the dim lamp of life just feebly lift
 An agonizing beam, at us to gaze,
 Then sink again, and quiver into death,
 That most pathetic herald of our own: 505
 How read we such sad scenes? As sent to man
 In perfect vengeance? no; in pity sent,
 To melt him down, like wax, and then impress,
 Indelible, Death's image on his heart,
 Bleeding for others, trembling for himself. 510
 We bleed, we tremble, we forget, we smile.
 The mind turns fool before the cheek is dry.
 Our quick returning folly cancels all,
 As the tide rushing raises what is writ
 In yielding sands, and smooths the letter'd shore. 515
 Lorenzo! hast thou ever weigh'd a sigh?
 Or study'd the philosophy of tears?
 (A science yet unlectur'd in our schools!)
 Hast thou descended deep into the breast,
 And seen their source? if not, descend with me, 520
 And trace these briny riv'lets to their springs.
 Our fun'ral tears from diff'rent causes rise:
 As if from sep'rate cisterns in the soul,
 Of various kinds they flow. From tender hearts,
 By soft contagion call'd, some burst at once, 525
 And stream obsequious to the leading eye:

Some ask more time, by curious art distill'd.
Some hearts, in secret hard, unapt to melt,
Struck by the magic of the public eye,
Like Moses' smitten rock, gush out amain : 530
Some weep to share the fate of the deceas'd,
So high in merit, and to them so dear :
They dwell on praises which they think they share,
And thus, without a blush, commend themselves.
Some mourn in proof that something they could love ;
They weep not to relieve their grief, but shew. 536
Some weep in perfect justice to the dead,
As conscious all their love is in arrear.
Some mischievously weep, not unappris'd.
Tears sometimes aid the conquest of an eye. 540
With what address the soft Ephesians draw
Their sable network o'er entangled hearts !
As seen thro' crystal, how their roses glow,
While liquid pearl runs trickling down their cheek ?
Of her's not prouder Egypt's wanton queen, 545
Carousing gems, herself dissolv'd in love.
Some weep at death, abstracted from the dead,
And celebrate, like Charles, their own decease.
By kind construction some are deem'd to weep,
Because a decent veil conceals their joy. 550
Some weep in earnest, and yet weep in vain,
As deep in indiscretion as in woe.
Passion, blind passion ! impotently pours
Tears that deserve more tears, while Reason sleeps,
Or gazes, like an idiot, unconcern'd, 555
Nor comprehends the meaning of the storm ;
Knows not it speaks to her, and her alone.
Irrationals all sorrow are beneath,
That noble gift ! that privilege of man !
From sorrow's pang, the birth of endless joy : 560
But these are barren of that birth divine ;
They weep impetuous as the summer storm,
And full as short ! the cruel grief soon tam'd,
They make a pastime of the stingle's tale ;
Far as the deep-resounding knell they spread 565
The dreadful news, and hardly feel it more ;

No grain of wisdom pays them for their woe.
 Half-round the globe the tears pump'd up by death
 Are spent in wat'ring vanities of life ;
 In making folly flourish still more fair. 570
 When the sick soul, her wonted stay withdrawn,
 Reclines on earth, and sorrows in the dust,
 Instead of learning there her true support,
 Tho' there thrown down her true support to learn,
 Without heaven's aid, impatient to be blest, 575
 She crawls to the next shrub, or bramble vile,
 Tho' from the stately cedar's arms she fell ;
 With stale forsworn embraces clings anew,
 The stranger weds, and blossoms, as before,
 In all the fruitless fopperies of life, 580
 Presents her weed, well fancy'd, at the ball,
 And raffles for the death's head on the ring.

So wept Aurelia, till the destin'd youth
 Stept in with his receipt for making smiles,
 And blanching fables into bridal bloom. 585
 So wept Lorenzo fair Clarissa's fate,
 Who gave that angel-boy on whom he doats,
 And dy'd to give him, orphan'd in his birth !
 Not such, Narcissa ! my distress for thee.
 I'll make an altar of thy sacred tomb, 590
 To sacrifice to Wisdom.—What wast thou ?
 “ Young, gay, and fortunate ! ” Each yields a theme :
 I'll dwell on each, to shun thought more severe ;
 (Heaven knows I labour with severer still !)
 I'll dwell on each, and quite exhaust thy death. 595
 A soul without reflection, like a pile
 Without inhabitant, to ruin runs.

And, first, thy youth : what says it to grey hairs ?
 Narcissa ! I'm become thy pupil now.—
 Early, bright, transient, chaste, as morning dew, 600
 She sparkled, was exhal'd, and went to heaven.
 Time on this head has snow'd, yet still 'tis borne
 Aloft, nor thinks but on another's grave.
 Cover'd with shame I speak it, age severe
 Old worn-out vice sets down for virtue fair ; 605
 With graceless gravity chastising youth.

That youth chafis'd surpassing in a fault,
Father of all, forgetfulness of death;
As if, like objects pressing on the sight,
Death had advanc'd too near us to be seen; 610
Or that life's loan time ripen'd into right,
And men might plead prescription from the grave,
Deathless, from repetition of reprieve.
Deathless? far from it! such are dead already;
Their hearts are bury'd, and the world their grave.

Tell me, some God! my guardian angel! tell 616
What thus infatuates? what enchantment plants
The phantom of an age 'twixt us and death,
Already at the door? He knocks; we hear,
And yet we will not hear. What mail defends 620
Our untouch'd hearts? What miracle turns off
The pointed thought, which from a thousand quivers
Is daily darted, and is daily shunn'd?
We stand, as in a battle, throngs on throngs
Around us falling, wounded oft ourselves, 625
Tho' bleeding with our wounds, immortal still!
We see Time's furrows on another's brow,
And Death intrench'd, preparing his assault:
How few themselves in that just mirror see!
Or, seeing, draw their inference as strong! 630
There death is certain; doubtful here: he must,
And soon; we may, within an age, expire.
Tho' grey our heads, our thoughts and aims are green;
Like damag'd clocks, whose hand and bell dissent;
Folly sings six, while Nature points at twelve. 635

Abfurd longevity! More, more, it cries:
More life, more wealth, more trash of ev'ry kind.
And wherefore mad for more, when relish fails?
Object and appetite must club for joy:
Shall folly labour hard to mend the bow. 640
Bawbles, I mean, that strike us from without,
While Nature is relaxing ev'ry string!
Ask thought for joy; grow rich, and hoard within.
Think you the soul, when this life's rattles cease,
Has nothing of more manly to succeed? 645
Contract the taste immortal; learn e'en now

To relish what alone subsists hereafter.
 Divine, or none, henceforth, your joys for ever.
 Of age the glory is to wish to die :

That wish is praise and promise ; it applauds 650
 Past life, and promises our future blifs.

What weakneſs ſee not children in their fires !
 Grand climacterical abſurdities !

Grey-hair'd authority, to faults of youth 655
 How ſhocking ! it makes folly thrice a fool,

And our firſt childhood might our laſt deſpiſe.
 Peace and eſteem is all that age can hope :
 Nothing but wiſdom gives the firſt ; the laſt
 Nothing but the reputè of being wiſe.

Folly bars both : our age is quite undone. 660

What folly can be ranker ? like our ſhadows,
 Our wiſhes lengthen as our ſun declines.
 No wiſh ſhould loiter, then, this ſide the grave.
 Our hearts ſhould leave the world before the knell
 Calls for our carcaſes to mend the ſoil. 665

Enough to live in tempeſt ; die in port :
 Age ſhould fly concurrence, cover in retreat
 Defects of judgment, and the will's ſubdue ;
 Walk thoughtful on the ſilent ſolemn ſhore
 Of that vaſt ocean it muſt ſail ſo ſoon, 670

And put good works on board, and wait the wind
 That ſhortly blows us into worlds unknown :
 If unconfider'd too, a dreadful ſcene !

All ſhould be prophets to themſelves ; foreſee 675
 Their future fate ; their future fate foretaſte :

This art would waſte the bitterneſs of death.
 The thought of death alone the fear deſtroys :

A diſaffection to that precious thought
 Is more than midnight darkneſs on the ſoul,
 Which ſleeps beneath it on a precipice, 680
 Puff'd off by the firſt blaſt, and loſt for ever.

Doeſt aſk, Lorenzo, why ſo warmly preſt,
 By repetition hammer'd on thine ear,
 The thought of death ? That thought is the machine,
 The grand machine ! that heaves us from the duſt, 685
 And rears us into men. That thought, ply'd home,

Will soon reduce the ghastly precipice
 O'erhanging hell; will soften the descent,
 And gently slope our passage to the grave.
 How warmly to be wish'd! what heart of flesh 690
 Would trifle with tremendous? dare extremes?
 Yawn o'er the fate of infinite? what hand,
 Beyond the blackest brand of censure bold,
 (To speak a language too well known to thee)
 Would at a moment give its all to chance, 695
 And stamp the dye for an eternity?

Aid me, Narcissa, aid me to keep pace
 With Destiny, and, ere her scissars cut
 My thread of life, to break this tougher thread
 Of moral death that ties me to the world. 700
 Sting thou my slumb'ring reason to send forth
 A thought of observation on the foe;
 To sally, and survey the rapid march
 Of his ten thousand messengers to man,
 Who, Jehu-like, behind him turns them all. 705
 All accident apart, by Nature sign'd,
 My warrant is gone out, though dormant yet;
 Perhaps behind one moment lurks my fate.

Must I then forward only look for Death?
 Backward I turn mine eye, and find him there. 710
 Man is a self-survivor ev'ry year.
 Man, like a stream, is in perpetual flow.
 Death's a destroyer of quotidian prey:
 My youth, my noontide his: my yesterday:
 The bold invader shares the present hour. 715
 Each moment on the former shuts the grave.
 While man is growing, life is in decrease,
 And cradles rock us nearer to the tomb.
 Our birth is nothing but our death begun,
 As tapers waste that instant they take fire. 720

Shall we then fear lest that should come to pass
 Which comes to pass each moment of our lives?
 If fear we must, let that death turn us pale
 Which murders strength and ardour; what remains
 Should rather call on Death than dread his call. 725
 Ye partners of my fault, and my decline,

Thoughtless of death, but when your neighbour's knell
(Rude visitant) knocks hard at your dull sense,
And with its thunder scarce obtains your ear!
Be death your theme in ev'ry place and hour; 730
Nor longer want, ye monumental Sires,
A brother tomb to tell you you shall die.

That death you dread (so great is Nature's skill!)
Know you shall court before you shall enjoy.

But you are learn'd; in volumes deep you sit, 735
In wisdom shallow. Pompous ignorance!

Would you be still more learned than the learn'd?
Learn well to know how much need not be known,
And what that knowledge which impairs your sense.

Our needful knowledge, like our needful food, 740
Unhedg'd, lies open in life's common field,
And bids all welcome to the vital feast.

You scorn what lies before you in the page
Of Nature and Experience, moral truth;
Of indispensable eternal fruit, 745

Fruit on which mortals feeding turn to gods;
And dive in science for distinguish'd names,
Dishonest fomentation of your pride,
Sinking in virtue as you rise in fame.

Your learning, like the lunar beam, affords 750
Light, but not heat, it leaves you undevout,
Frozen at heart, while speculation shines.

Awake, ye curious Indigators, fond
Of knowing all but what avails you known.
If you would learn Death's character, attend. 755

All casts of conduct, all degrees of health,
All dyes of fortune, and all dates of age,
Together shook in his impartial urn,

Come forth at random; or, if choice is made,
The choice is quite sarcastic, and insults 760
All bold conjecture and fond hopes of man.

What countless multitudes not only leave,
But deeply disappoint us by their deaths!

Tho' great our sorrow, greater our surprise.

Like other tyrants, Death delights to smite 765
What, smitten, most proclaims the pride of power

And arbitrary nod. His joy supreme
 To bid the wretch survive the fortunate ;
 The feeble wrap th' athletic in his shroud ; 769
 And weeping fathers build their children's tomb :
 Me thine ! Narcissa. What, though short thy date ?
 Virtue, not rolling suns, the mind matures.
 That life is long which answers life's great end.
 The time that bears no fruit deserves no name.
 The man of wisdom is the man of years. 775
 In hoary youth Methusalems may die :
 O how misdated on their flatt'ring tombs !
 Narcissa's youth has lectur'd me thus far :
 And can her gaiety give counsel too ?
 That, like the Jews' fam'd oracle of gems, 780
 Sparkles instruction ; such as throws new light,
 And opens more the character of Death,
 Ill known to thee, Lorenzo ! this thy vaunt !
 " Give Death his due, the wretched and the old ;
 " E'en let him sweep his rubbish to the grave ; 785
 " Let him not violate kind Nature's laws,
 " But own man born to live as well as die."
 Wretched and old thou giv'st him ; young and gay
 He takes ; and plunder is a tyrant's joy.
 What if I prove, " the farthest from the fear 790
 " Are often nearest to the stroke of fate ?"
 All more than common menaces an end.
 A blaze betokens brevity of life.
 As if bright embers should emit a flame,
 Glad spirits sparkled from Narcissa's eye, 795
 And made Youth younger, and taught Life to live.
 As Nature's opposites wage endless war,
 For this offence, as treason to the deep
 Inviolable stupor of his reign,
 Where lust and turbulent ambition sleep, 800
 Death took swift vengeance. As he life detests,
 More life is still more odious ; and, reduced
 By conquest, aggrandizes more his power.
 But wherefore aggrandized ? By heaven's decree
 To plant the soul on her eternal guard, 805
 In awful expectation of our end.

Thus runs Death's dread commission ; " Strike, but so
 " As most alarms the living by the dead."

Hence stratagem delights him, and surprise,
 And cruel sport with man's securities. 810

Not simple conquest, triumph is his aim ;
 And where least fear'd, there conquest triumphs most.
 This proves my bold assertion not too bold.

What are his arts to lay our fears asleep ?

Tiberian arts his purposes wrap up 815
 In deep Diffimulation's darkest night.

Like princes unconfess'd in foreign courts,
 Who travel under cover, Death assumes
 The name and look of Life, and dwells among us :
 He takes all shapes that serve his black designs : 820

Tho' master of a wider empire far
 Than that o'er which the Roman Eagle flew.
 Like Nero, he's a fiddler, charioteer ;
 Or drives his phaeton in female guise ;
 Quite unsuspected, till the wheel beneath 825
 His disarray'd oblation he devours.

He most affects the forms least like himself,
 His slender self : hence burly corpulence
 Is his familiar wear, and sleek disguise.
 Behind the rosy bloom he loves to lurk ; 830
 Or ambush in a smile ; or, wanton, dive
 In dimples deep ; Love's eddies, which draw in
 Unwary hearts, and sink them in despair.
 Such on Narcissa's couch he loiter'd long
 Unknown, and, when detected, still was seen 835
 To smile : such peace has innocence in death !

Most happy they whom least his arts deceive !
 One eye on death, and one full fix'd on heaven,
 Becomes a mortal and immortal man.

Long on his wiles a piqu'd and jealous spy, 840
 I've seen, or dreamt I saw, the tyrant dress,
 Lay by his horrors, and put on his smiles.
 Say, Muse, for thou remember'st, call it back,
 And shew Lorenzo the surprising scene ;
 If 'twas a dream, his genius can explain. 845

'Twas in a circle of the gay I stood :

Death would have enter'd ; Nature push'd him back :

Supported by a doctor of renown,

His point he gain'd ; then artfully dismiss'd

The sage ; for Death design'd to be conceal'd : 850

He gave an old vivacious usurer

His meagre aspect, and his naked bones,

In gratitude for plumping up his prey,

A pamper'd spendthrift, whose fantastic air,

Well-fashion'd figure, and cockaded brow, 855

He took in change, and underneath the pride

Of costly linen, tuck'd his filthy shroud.

His crooked bow he straighten'd to a cane,

And hid his deadly shafts in Myra's eye.

The dreadful masquerader, thus equipp'd, 860

Out fallies on adventures. Ask you where ?

Where is he not ? For his peculiar haunts

Let this suffice : sure as night follows day,

Death treads in Pleasure's footsteps round the world,

When Pleasure treads the paths which Reason shuns.

When against Reason Riot shuts the door, 866

And Gaiety supplies the place of Sense,

Then, foremost at the banquet and the ball,

Death leads the dance, or stamps the deadly dye,

Nor ever fails the midnight bowl to crown. 870

Gaily carousing to his gay compeers,

Inly he laughs to see them laugh at him,

As absent far ; and when the revel burns,

When Fear is banish'd, and triumphant Thought,

Calling for all the joys beneath the moon, 875

Against him turns the key, and bids him sup

With their progenitors—he drops his mask,

Frowns out at full ; they start—despair—expire.

Scarce with more sudden terror and surprise,

From his black mask of nitre, touch'd by fire, 880

He bursts, expands, roars, blazes, and devours.

And is not this triumphant treachery,

And more than simple conquest, in the fiend ?

And now, Lorenzo, dost thou wrap thy soul

In soft security, because unknown 885

Which moment is commission'd to destroy ?
 In death's uncertainty thy danger lies.
 Is death uncertain ? therefore thou be fix'd,
 Fix'd as a centinel, all eye, all ear,
 All expectation of the coming foe. 890
 Rouse, stand in arms, nor lean against thy spear,
 Lest slumbers steal one moment o'er thy soul,
 And Fate surprise thee nodding. Watch ; be strong ;
 Thus give each day the merit and renown
 Of dying well, though doom'd but once to die : 895
 Nor let life's period, hidden, (as from most)
 Hide, too, from thee the precious use of life.

Early, not sudden, was Narcissa's fate :
 Soon, not surprising, Death his visit paid :
 Her thought went forth to meet him on his way, 900
 Nor gaiety forgot it was to die.

Tho' fortune, too, (our third and final theme)
 As an accomplice, play'd her gaudy plumes,
 And ev'ry glitt'ring gewgaw on her sight,
 To dazzle and debauch it from its mark. 905
 Death's dreadful advent is the mark of man,
 And ev'ry thought that misses it is blind.
 Fortune with Youth and Gaiety conspir'd
 To weave a triple wreath of happiness,
 (If happiness on earth) to crown her brow : 910
 And could Death charge through such a shining shield ?

That shining shield invites the tyrant's spear,
 As if to damp our elevated aims,
 And strongly preach humility to man.
 O how portentous is prosperity ! 915
 How, comet-like, it threatens while it shines !
 Few years but yield us proof of Death's ambition
 To cull his victims from the fairest fold,
 And sheath his shafts in all the pride of life.
 When flooded with abundance ; purpled o'er 920
 With recent honours ; bloom'd with ev'ry bliss ;
 Set up in ostentation ; made the gaze,
 The gaudy centre of the public eye :
 When Fortune, thus, has toss'd her child in air,
 Snatch'd from the covert of an humble state, 925

How often have I seen him dropt at once,
Our morning's envy ! and our ev'ning's sigh !
As if her bounties were the signal given,
The flow'ry wreath, to mark the sacrifice.
And call death's arrows on the destin'd prey. 930

High Fortune seems in cruel league with Fate.
Ask you for what ? To give his war on man
The deeper dread, and more illustrious spoil ;
Thus to keep daring mortals more in awe.
And burns Lorenzo still for the sublime 935
Of life ? to hang his airy nest on high,
On the slight timber of the topmost bough,
Rock'd at each breeze, and menacing a fall ?
Granting grim Death at equal distance there,
Yet peace begins just where ambition ends. 940
What makes man wretched ? happiness deny'd ?
Lorenzo ! no ; 'tis happiness disdain'd :
She comes too meanly dress'd to win our smile,
And calls herself Content, a homely name !
Our flame is transport, and content our scorn. 945
Ambition turns, and shuts the door against her,
And weds a toil, a tempest, in her stead ;
A tempest to warm transport near of kin.
Unknowing what our mortal state admits,
Life's modest joys we ruin while we raise, 950
And all our ecstasies are wounds to peace ;
Peace, the full portion of mankind below.

And since thy peace is dear, ambitious youth !
Of fortune fond ! as thoughtless of thy fate !
As late I drew Death's picture, to stir up 955
Thy wholesome fears, now, drawn in contrast, see
Gay Fortune's, thy vain hopes to reprimand,
See, high in air the sportive goddess hangs,
Unlocks her casket, spreads her glitt'ring ware,
And calls the giddy winds to puff abroad 960
Her random bounties o'er the gaping throng.
All rush rapacious ; friends o'er trodden friends,
Sons o'er their fathers, subjects o'er their kings,
Priests o'er their gods, and lovers o'er the fair,
(Still more ador'd) to snatch the golden show'r. 965

Gold glitters most where virtue shines no more,
As stars from absent suns have leave to shine.

O what a precious pack of votaries,
Unkennell'd from the prisons and the stews,
Pour in, all op'ning in their idol's praise ! 970
All, ardent, eye each wafture of her hand,
And, wide expanding their voracious jaws,
Morsel on morsel swallow down unchew'd,
Untasted, thro' mad appetite for more ;
Gorg'd to the throat, yet lean and rav'nous still : 975
Sagacious all to trace the smallest game,
And bold to seize the greatest. If (blest chance !)
Court-zephyrs sweetly breathe, they launch, they fly,
O'er just, o'er sacred, all forbidden ground.
Drunk with the burning scent of place or power, 980
Staunch to the foot of Lucre till they die.

Or if for men you take them, as I mark
Their manners, thou their various fates survey.
With aim mismeasur'd, and impetuous speed,
Some, darting, strike their ardent wish far off, 985
Through fury to possess it : some succeed,
But stumble and let fall the taken prize.
From some, by sudden blasts, 'tis whirl'd away,
And lodg'd in bosoms that ne'er dream'd of gain.
To some it sticks so close, that, when torn off, 990
Torn is the man, and mortal is the wound.
Some, o'er-enamour'd of their bags, run mad,
Groan under gold, yet weep for want of bread.
Together some (unhappy rivals) seize,
And rend abundance into poverty ; 995
Loud croaks the raven of the law, and smiles ;
Smiles, too, the goddess ; but smiles most at those
(Just victims of exorbitant desire !)
Who perish at their own requests, and, whelm'd
Beneath her load of lavish grants, expire. 1000
Fortune is famous for her numbers slain ;
The number small which happiness can bear.
Tho' various for awhile their fates, at last
One curse involves them all : at Death's approach

All read their riches backward into loss, 1005
And mourn in just proportion to their store.

And Death's approach (if orthodox my song)
Is hasten'd by the lure of Fortune's smiles.

And art thou still a glutton of bright gold?

And art thou still rapacious of thy ruin? 1010

Death loves a shining mark, a signal blow;

A blow which, while it executes, alarms,

And startles thousands with a single fall.

As when some stately growth of oak, or pine,

Which nods aloft, and proudly spreads her shade,

The sun's defiance, and the flock's defence, 1016

By the strong strokes of lab'ring hinds subdu'd,

Loud groans her last, and, rushing from her height,

In cumbrous ruin thunders to the ground;

The conscious forest trembles at the shock, 1020

And hill, and stream, and distant dale, resound.

These high-aim'd darts of Death, and these alone,

Should I collect, my quiver would be full;

A quiver which, suspended in mid air,

Or near heav'n's archer in the zodiac hung, 1025

(So could it be) should draw the public eye,

The gaze and contemplation of mankind!

A constellation awful, yet benign,

To guide the gay thro' life's tempestuous wave,

Nor suffer them to strike the common rock; 1030

“From greater danger to grow more secure,

“And, wrapt in happiness, forget their fate.”

Lyfander, happy past the common lot,

Was warn'd of danger, but too gay to fear.

He woo'd the fair Aspasia; she was kind. 1035

In youth, form, fortune, fame, they both were bless'd:

All who knew envy'd: yet in envy lov'd:

Can Fancy form more finish'd happiness?

Fix'd was the nuptial hour. Her stately dome

Rose on the sounding beach. The glitt'ring spires

Float in the wave, and break against the shore: 1041

So break those glitt'ring shadows, human joys.

The faithless morning smil'd: he takes his leave

To re-embrace in ecstasies at eve:

The rising storm forbids : the news arrives ; 1045
 Untold she saw it in her servant's eye.
 She felt it seen (her heart was apt to feel)
 And drown'd, without the furious ocean's aid,
 In suffocating sorrows shares his tomb.
 Now round the sumptuous bridal monument 1050
 The guilty billows innocently roar,
 And the rough sailor passing, drops a tear.
 A tear ?—can tears suffice ?—but not for me,
 How vain our efforts ! and our arts how vain !
 The distant train of thought I took, to shun, 1055
 Has thrown me on my fate.—These dy'd together ;
 Happy in ruin ! undivorc'd by death !
 Or ne'er to meet, or ne'er to part, is peace.—
 Narcissa ! Pity bleeds at thought of thee ;
 Yet thou wast only near me, not myself. 1060
 Survive myself ?—that cures all other woe.
 Narcissa lives ; Philander is forgot.
 O the soft commerce ! O the tender ties,
 Close twisted with the fibres of the heart ! 1064
 Which, broken, break them, and drain off the soul
 Of human joy, and make it pain to live.—
 And is it then to live ? When such friends part
 'Tis the survivor dies.—My heart ! no more. 1068



THE COMPLAINT.

NIGHT VI.

THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.

IN TWO PARTS.

Containing the

NATURE, PROOF, AND IMPORTANCE OF IMMORTALITY.

PART I.

Where, among other Things, Glory and Riches are particularly considered.

Humbly inscribed to the

RIGHT HON. HENRY PELHAM,

First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

PREFACE.

FEW ages have been deeper in dispute about religion than this. The dispute about religion, and the practice of it, seldom go together. The shorter, therefore, the dispute, the better. I think it may be reduced to this single question, Is man immortal, or is he not? If he is not, all our disputes are mere amusements, or trials of skill. In this case, truth, reason, religion, which give our discourses such pomp and solemnity, are (as will be shewn) mere empty sound, without any meaning in them: but if man is immortal, it will behove him to be very serious about eternal consequences; or, in other words, to be truly religious.— And this great fundamental truth, unestablished, or unawakened in the minds of men, is, I conceive, the real source and support of all our infidelity, how remote soever the particular objections advanced may seem to be from it.

Sensible appearances affect most men much more than abstract reasonings; and we daily see bodies drop around us, but the soul is invisible. The power which inclination has over the judgment, is greater than can be well conceived by those that have not had an experience of it; and of what numbers is it the sad interest that souls should not survive! The heathen world confessed that they rather hoped, than firmly

believed, immortality ! and how many heathens have we still amongst us ! The sacred page assures us, that life and immortality is brought to light by the Gospel ; but by how many is the Gospel rejected or overlooked ! From these considerations, and from my being accidentally privy to the sentiments of some particular persons, I have been long persuaded that most, if not all our infidels, (whatever name they take, and whatever scheme, for argument's sake, and to keep themselves in countenance, they patronize) are supported in their deplorable error by some doubt of their immortality at the bottom ; and I am satisfied, that men, once thoroughly convinced of their immortality, are not far from being Christians : for it is hard to conceive that a man, fully conscious eternal pain or happiness will certainly be his lot, should not earnestly and impartially inquire after the surest means of escaping one, and securing the other : and of such an earnest and impartial inquiry I well know the consequence.

Here, therefore, in proof of this most fundamental truth, some plain arguments are offered ; arguments derived from principles which infidels admit in common with believers : arguments which appear to me altogether irresistible, and such as, I am satisfied, will have great weight with all who give themselves the small trouble of looking seriously into their own bosoms, and of observing, with any tolerable degree of attention, what daily passes round about them in the world. If some arguments shall here occur which others have declined, they are submitted, with all deference, to better judgments, in this, of all points, the most important ! for as to the being of a God, that is no longer disputed ; but it is undisputed for this reason only, viz. because where the least pretence to reason is admitted, it must for ever be indisputable : and, of consequence, no man can be betrayed into a dispute of that nature by vanity, which has a principal share in animating our modern combatants against other articles of our belief.

SHE* (for I know not yet her name in heaven)
 Not early, like Narcissa, left the scene,
 Nor sudden, like Philander. What avail?
 This seeming mitigation but inflames:
 This fancy'd med'cine heightens the disease. 5
 The longer known, the closer still she grew,
 And gradual parting is a gradual death.
 'Tis the grim tyrant's engine, which extorts
 By tardy pressure's still-increasing weight,
 From hardest hearts confession of distress. 10

O the long dark approach, thro' years of pain,
 Death's gall'ry! (might I dare to call it so)
 With dismal doubt and fable terror hung,
 Sick Hope's pale lamp its only glimm'ring ray:
 There Fate my melancholy walk ordain'd, 15
 Forbid Self-love itself to flatter there.
 How oft I gaz'd, prophetically sad!
 How oft I saw her dead, while yet in smiles!
 In smiles she sunk her grief to lessen mine:
 She spoke me comfort, and increas'd my pain. 20
 Like powerful armies trenching at a town,
 By slow and silent, but resistless, sap,
 In his pale progress gently gaining ground,
 Death urg'd his deadly siege; in spite of art,
 Of all the balmy blessings Nature lends 25
 To succour frail Humanity. Ye stars!
 (Not now first made familiar to my sight)
 And thou, O moon! bear witness, many a night
 He tore the pillow from beneath my head,
 Ty'd down my sore attention to the shock, 30
 By ceaseless depredations on a life
 Dearer than that he left me. Dreadful post
 Of observation! darker ev'ry hour!
 Less dread the day that drove me to the brink,
 And pointed at eternity below, 35
 When my soul shudder'd at futurity;
 When, on a moment's point, th' important dye
 Of life and death spun doubtful, ere it fell,
 And turn'd up life, my title to more woe.

* Referring to Night the Fifth.

But why more woe? more comfort let it be. 40
Nothing is dead but that which wish'd to die;
Nothing is dead but wretchedness and pain;
Nothing is dead, but what incumber'd, gall'd,
Block'd up the pass, and barr'd from real life.

Where dwells that wish most ardent of the wise? 45
Too dark the sun to see it; highest stars
Too low to reach it, Death, great Death alone,
O'er stars and sun, triumphant lands us there.

Nor dreadful our transition, tho' the mind,
An artist at creating self alarms, 50
Rich in expedients for inquietude,
Is prone to paint it dreadful. Who can take
Death's portrait true; the tyrant never fat.
Our sketch all random strokes; conjecture all;
Close shuts the grave, nor tells one single tale. 55
Death and his image rising in the brain
Bear faint resemblance; never are alike;
Fear shakes the pencil; Fancy loves excess;
Dark Ignorance is lavish of her shades;
And these the formidable picture draw. 60

But grant the worst; 'tis past; new prospects rise,
And drop a veil eternal o'er her tomb.
Far other views our contemplation claim,
Views that o'erpay the rigours of our life;
Views that suspend our agonies in death. 65
Wrapt in the thought of immortality,
Wrapt in the single, the triumphant thought!
Long life might lapse, age unperceiv'd come on,
And find the soul unfated with her theme.
Its nature, proof, importance, fire my song. 70
O that my song could emulate my soul!
Like her immortal. No!—the soul disdains
A mark so mean; far nobler hope inflames;
If endless ages can outweigh an hour,
Let not the laurel, but the palm, inspire. 75

Thy nature, Immortality! who knows?
And yet who knows it not? it is but life
In stronger thread of brighter colour spun,
And spun for ever, dipt by cruel Fate

In Stygian dye, how black, how brittle, here! 80
How short our correspondence with the sun!
And while it lasts inglorious! our best deeds
How wanting in their weight! our highest joys
Small cordials to support us in our our pain,
And give us strength to suffer. But how great 85
To mingle int'rests, converse, amities,
With all the sons of reason, scatter'd wide
Thro' habitable space, wherever born,
Howe'er endow'd! to live free citizens
Of universal Nature! to lay hold, 90
By more than feeble faith, on the Supreme!
To call heav'n's rich unfathomable mines
(Mines which support archangels in their state)
Our own! to rise in science as in bliss,
Initiate in the secrets of the skies! 95
To read creation; read its mighty plan
In the bare bosom of the Deity!
The plan and execution to collate!
To see, before each glance of piercing thought,
All cloud, all shadow, blown remote, and leave 100
No mystery—but that of love divine,
Which lifts us on the seraph's flaming wing,
From earth's aceldama, this field of blood,
Of inward anguish, and of outward ill,
From darkness and from dust, to such a scene! 105
Love's element! true joy's illustrious home!
From earth's sad contrast (now deplor'd) more fair!
What exquisite vicissitude of fate!
Bless'd absolution of our blackest hour!

Lorenzo! these are thoughts that make man man,
The wise illumine, aggrandize the great. III
How great, (while yet we tread the kindred clod,
And ev'ry moment fear to sink beneath
The clod we tread, soon trodden by our sons)
How great, in the wild whirl of Time's pursuits, 115
To stop, and pause; involv'd in high presage,
Thro' the long vista of a thousand years,
To stand contemplating our distant selves,
As in a magnifying mirror seen,

Enlarg'd, ennobled, elevate divine !

120

To prophesy our own futurities !

To gaze in thought on what all thought transcends !

To talk, with fellow candidates, of joys

As far beyond conception as desert,

Ourselves th' astonish'd talkers and the tale !

125

Lorenzo ! swells thy bosom at the thought ?

The swell becomes thee : 'tis an honest pride.

Revere thyself ;—and yet thyself despise.

His nature no man can o'er-rate, and none

Can under-rate his merit. Take good heed,

130

Nor there be modest where thou shouldst be proud ;

That almost universal error shun.

How just our pride, when we behold those heights !

Not those ambition paints in air, but those

Reason points out, and ardent Virtue gains,

135

And angels emulate. Our pride how just !

When mount we ? when these shackles cast ? when quit

This cell of the creation ? this small nest,

Stuck in a corner of the universe,

Wrapt up in fleecy cloud and fine-spun air ?

140

Fine-spun to sense, but gross and feculent

To souls celestial ; souls ordain'd to breathe

Ambrosial gales, and drink a purer sky ;

Greatly triumphant on Time's farther shore,

Where Virtue reigns, enrich'd with full arrears,

145

While Pomp imperial begs an alms of Peace.

In empire high, or in proud science deep,

Ye born of Earth ! on what can you confer,

With half the dignity, with half the gain,

The gust, the glow, of rational delight,

150

As on this theme, which angels praise and share ?

Man's fates and favours are a theme in heav'n.

What wretched repetition cloy's us here !

What periodic potions for the sick !

Distemper'd bodies ! and distemper'd minds !

155

In an eternity what scenes shall strike !

Adventures thicken ! novelties surprise !

What webs of wonder shall unravel there !

What full day pour on all the paths of heav'n,

And light th' Almighty's footsteps in the deep! 160
 How shall the blessed day of our discharge
 Unwind, at once, the labyrinths of Fate,
 And straighten its inextricable maze!

If inextinguishable thirst in man
 To know how rich, how full, our banquet there!
 There, not the moral world alone unfolds; 166
 The world material, lately seen in shades,
 And in those shades by fragments only seen,
 And seen those fragments by the lab'ring eye,
 Unbroken, then, illustrious and entire, 170
 Its ample sphere, its universal frame,
 In full dimensions, swells to the survey,
 And enters, at one glance, the ravish'd sight.
 From some superior point, (where who can tell?
 Suffice it 'tis a point where gods reside) 175
 How shall the stranger man's illumin'd eye,
 In the vast ocean of unbounded space,
 Behold an infinite of floating worlds
 Divide the crystal waves of æther pure,
 In endless voyage without port? The least 180
 Of these disseminated orbs how great!
 Great as they are, what numbers these surpass,
 Huge as leviathan to that small race,
 Those twinkling multitudes of little life,
 He swallows unperceiv'd! Stupendous these; 185
 Yet what are these stupendous to the whole?
 As particles, as atoms ill perceiv'd;
 As circulating globules in our veins;
 So vast the plan. Fecundity divine!
 Exub'rant Source! perhaps I wrong thee still. 190

If admiration is a source of joy,
 What transport hence! yet this the least in heav'n.
 What this to that illustrious robe he wears,
 Who tofs'd this mass of wonders from his hand,
 A specimen, an earnest of his pow'r? 195
 'Tis to that glory, whence all glory flows,
 As the mead's meanest flow'ret to the sun
 Which gave it birth. But what this sun of heav'n?
 This bliss supreme of the supremely blest?

Death, only death, the question can resolve. 200
 By death cheap bought th' ideas of our joy;
 The bare ideas! solid happiness
 So distant from its shadow chas'd below.

And chase we still the phantom thro' the fire,
 O'er bog, and brake, and precipice, till death? 205
 And toil we still for sublunary pay?
 Defy the dangers of the field and flood,
 Or, spider-like, spin out our precious all,
 Our more than vitals spin, (if no regard
 To great futurity) in curious webs 210
 Of subtle thought and exquisite design,
 (Fine network of the brain!) to catch a fly!
 The momentary buz of vain renown!
 A name! a mortal immortality!

Or (meaner still!) instead of grasping air, 215
 For sordid lucre plunge we in the mire?
 Drudge, sweat, thro' ev'ry shame, for ev'ry gain,
 For vile contaminating trash; throw up
 Our hope in heav'n, our dignity with man,
 And deify the dirt matur'd to gold? 220
 Ambition, Av'rice, the two dæmons these
 Which goad thro' ev'ry slough our human herd,
 Hard-travell'd from the cradle to the grave.
 How low the wretches stoop! how steep they climb!
 These dæmons burn mankind, but most possess 225
 Lorenzo's bosom, and turn out the skies.

Is it in time to hide eternity?
 And why not in an atom on the shore
 To cover ocean? or a mote the sun?
 Glory and wealth! have they this blinding pow'r?
 What if to them I prove Lorenzo blind? 231
 Would it surprise thee? be thou then surpris'd;
 Thou neither know'st: their nature learn from me.

Mark well, as foreign as these subjects seem,
 What close connexion ties them to my theme. 235
 First, what is true ambition? The pursuit
 Of glory nothing less than man can share.
 Were they as vain as gaudy-minded man,
 As statulent with fumes of self-applause,

Their arts and conquests animals might boast,
 And claim their laurel crowns as well as we,
 But not celestial. Here we stand alone,
 As in our form, distinct, pre-eminent;
 If prone in thought, our stature is our shame,
 And man should blush his forehead meets the skies.

246

The visible and present are for brutes,
 A slender potion, and a narrow bound!
 These reason, with an energy divine,
 O'erleaps, and claims the future and unseen,
 The vast unseen! the future fathomless!

250

When the great soul buoys up to this high point,
 Leaving gross Nature's sediments below,
 Then, and then only, Adam's offspring quits
 The sage and hero of the fields and woods,
 Asserts his rank, and rises into man.

255

This is ambition; this is human fire.
 Can parts or place (two bold pretenders!) make
 Lorenzo great, and pluck him from the throng?

Genius and Art, Ambition's boasted wings,
 Our boast but ill deserve: a feeble aid!

260

Dedalian engin'ry! If these alone
 Assist our flight, Fame's flight is Glory's fall.
 Heart-merit wanting, mount we ne'er so high,
 Our height is but the gibbet of our name.

A celebrated wretch when I behold,

265

When I behold a genius bright and base,
 Of tow'ring talents and terrestrial aims,
 Methinks I see, as thrown from her high sphere,
 The glorious fragments of a soul immortal,
 With rubbish mix'd, and glitt'ring in the dust:

270

Struck at the splendid melancholy sight,
 At once compassion soft, and envy, rise——
 But wherefore envy? talents angel-bright,
 If wanting worth, are shining instruments
 In false Ambition's hand, to finish faults
 Illustrious, and give Infamy renown.

275

Great ill is an achievement of great pow'rs.
 Plain sense but rarely leads us far astray.
 Reason the means, affections chuse our end.

Means have no merit, if our end amiss. 280

If wrong our hearts, our heads are right in vain.

What is a Pelham's head to Pelham's heart?

Hearts are proprietors of all applause.

Right ends and means make wisdom. Wordly wise

Is but half-witted, at its highest praise. 285

Let genius, then, despair to make thee great,

Nor flatter station. What is station high?

'Tis a proud mendicant; it boasts and begs;

It begs an alms of homage from the throng,

And oft' the throng denies its charity. 290

Monarchs and Ministers are awful names;

Whoever wear them challenge our devoir.

Religion, public order, both exact

External homage, and a supple knee,

To beings pompously set up, to serve 295

The meanest slave; all more is Merit's due,

Her sacred and inviolable right,

Nor ever paid the monarch, but the man.

Our hearts ne'er bow but to superior worth,

Nor ever fail of their allegiance there. 300

Fools, indeed, drop the man in their account,

And vote the mantle into majesty.

Let the small savage boast his silver fur,

His royal robe unborrow'd and unbought,

His own, descending fairly from his fires. 305

Shall man be proud to wear his livery,

And souls in ermin scorn a soul without?

Can place or lessen us, or aggrandize?

Pygmies are pygmies still, tho' perch'd on alps,

And pyramids are pyramids in vales. 310

Each man makes his own stature, builds himself.

Virtue alone outbuilds the pyramids;

Her monuments shall last when Egypt's fall.

Of these sure truths dost thou demand the cause?

The cause is lodg'd in immortality. 315

Hear, and assent. Thy bosom burns for power;

What station charms thee? I'll install thee there;

'Tis thine. And art thou greater than before?

Then thou before wast something less than man.

Has thy new post betray'd thee into pride? 320
That treach'rous pride betrays thy dignity;
That pride defames humanity, and calls
The being mean which staffs or strings can raise:
That pride, like hooded hawks, in darkness soars,
From blindness bold, and tow'ring to the skies. 325
'Tis born of Ignorance, which knows not man:
An angel's second, nor his second long.
A Nero, quitting his imperial throne,
And courting glory from the tinkling string,
But faintly shadows an immortal soul, 330
With empire's self to pride or rapture fir'd.
If nobler motives minister no cure,
Ev'n vanity forbids thee to be vain.

High worth is elevated place: 'tis more,
It makes the post stand candidate for thee; 335
Makes more than monarchs, makes an honest man:
Tho' no Exchequer it commands, 'tis wealth;
And tho' it wears no ribband, 'tis renown:
Renown that would not quit thee tho' disgrac'd,
Nor leave thee pendant on a master's smile. 340
Other ambition Nature interdicts;
Nature proclaims it most absurd in man,
By pointing at his origin and end;
Milk and a swathe, at first, his whole demand;
His whole domain, at last, a turf or stone; 345
To whom, between, a world may seem too small.

Souls truly great dart forward on the wing
Of just Ambition, to the grand result,
The curtain's fall; there see the buskin'd chief
Unshod behind this momentary scene, 350
Reduc'd to his own stature, low or high,
As vice or virtue sinks him, or sublimes;
And laugh at this fantastic mummary,
This antic prelude of grotesque events,
Where dwarfs are often stilted, and betray 355
A littleness of soul by worlds o'errun,
And nations laid in blood. Dread sacrifice
To Christian pride! which had with horror shock'd
The darkest Pagans, offer'd to their gods.

O thou Most Christian enemy to peace ! 360
Again in arms ? again provoking Fate ?
That prince, and that alone, is truly great,
Who draws the sword reluctant, gladly sheaths ;
On empire builds what empire far outweighs,
And makes his throne a scaffold to the skies. 365

Why this so rare ? because forgot of all
The day of death, that venerable day
Which sits as judge ; that day which shall pronounce
On all our days, absolve them, or condemn,
Lorenzo ! never shut thy thought against it ; 370
Be levees ne'er so full, afford it room,
And give it audience in the cabinet.
That friend consulted, flatteries apart,
Will tell thee fair if thou art great or mean.

To dote on ought may leave us, or be left, 375
Is that ambition ? then let flames descend,
Point to the centre their inverted spires,
And learn humiliation from a soul
Which boasts her lineage from celestial fire.
Yet these are they the world pronounces wise ; 380
The world, which cancels Nature's right and wrong,
And casts new wisdom : ev'n the grave man lends
His solemn face to countenance the coin.

Wisdom for parts is madness for the whole.
This stamps the paradox, and gives us leave 385
To call the wisest weak, the richest poor,
The most ambitious unambitious, mean ;
In triumph mean, and abject on a throne.
Nothing can make it less than mad in man
To put forth all his ardour, all his art, 390

And give his soul her full unbounded flight,
But reaching him who gave her wings to fly.
When blind Ambition quite mistakes her road,
And downward pores for that which shines above,
Substantial happiness and true renown, 395
Then, like an idiot gazing on the brook,
We leap at stars, and fasten in the mud ;
At glory grasp, and sink in infamy.
Ambition ! pow'rful source of good and ill !

Thy strength in man, like length of wing in birds, 400
When disengag'd from earth, with greater ease,
And swifter flight, transports us to the skies ;
By toys entangled, or in guilt bemir'd,
It turns a curse : it is our chain and scourge,
In this dark dungeon, where confin'd we lie, 405
Close-grated by the sordid bars of sense,
All prospect of eternity shut out,
And but for execution ne'er set free.

With error in ambition justly charg'd,
Find we Lorenzo wiser in his wealth ? 410
What if thy rental I reform, and draw
An inventory new to set thee right ?
Where thy true treasure ? Gold says, " Not in me : "
And, " Not in me," the Di'mond. Gold is poor ;
India's insolvent ; seek it in thyself ; 415
Seek in thy naked self, and find it there ;
In being so descended, form'd, endow'd ;
Sky-born, sky-guided, sky-returning race !
Erect, immortal, rational, divine !
In senses which inherit earth and heav'ns : 420
Enjoy the various riches Nature yields ;
Far nobler ! give the riches they enjoy ;
Give taste to fruits, and harmony to groves ;
Their radiant beams to gold, and gold's bright fire ;
Take in, at once, the landscape of the world, 425
At a small inlet, which a grain might close,
And half create the wondrous world they see.
Our senses, as our reason, are divine.
But for the magic organ's pow'rful charm,
Earth were a rude uncolour'd chaos still. 430
Objects are but th' occasion, ours th' exploit ;
Ours is the cloth, the pencil, and the paint,
Which Nature's admirable picture draws,
And beautifies creation's ample dome.
Like Milton's Eve, when gazing on the lake, 435
Man makes the matchless image man admires.
Say then, shall man, his thoughts all sent abroad,
Superior wonders in himself forgot,
His admiration waste on objects round

When heaven makes him the soul of all he sees? 440
 Absurd! not rare! so great, so mean, is man.

What wealth in senses such as these! what wealth
 In fancy, fir'd to form a fairer scene
 Than sense surveys! in Mem'ry's firm record,
 Which, should it perish, could this world recal 445
 From the dark shadows of o'erwhelming years!
 In colours fresh, originally bright,
 Preserve its portrait, and report its fate!

What wealth in intellect, that sov'reign pow'r!
 Which sense and fancy summons to the bar; 450
 Interrogates, approves, or reprehends;
 And from the mass those underlings import,
 From their materials sifted and refin'd,
 And in Truth's balance accurately weigh'd,
 Forms art and science, government and law, 455
 The solid basis, and the beauteous frame,
 The vitals, and the grace, of civil life!
 And manners (sad exception!) set aside,
 Strikes out, with master hand, a copy fair
 Of his idea, whose indulgent thought 460
 Long, long ere Chaos teem'd, plann'd human blifs.

What wealth in souls that soar, dive, range around,
 Disdaining limit or from place or time,
 And hear, at once, in thought extensive, hear
 Th' Almighty Fiat, and the trumpet's sound! 465
 Bold on creation's outside walk, and view
 What was, and is, and more than ere shall be;
 Commanding, with omnipotence of thought,
 Creations new in Fancy's field to rise!
 Souls that can grasp whate'er th' Almighty made, 470
 And wander wild thro' things impossible!
 What wealth in faculties of endless growth,
 In quenchless passions violent to crave,
 In liberty to chuse, in pow'r to reach,
 And in duration (how thy riches rise!) 475
 Duration to perpetuate—boundless blifs!

Ask you what power resides in feeble man
 That blifs to gain? Is virtue's then unknown?
 Virtue! our present peace, our future prize.

Man's unprecarioꝛs, natural estate,
 Improveable at will, in virtue lies ;
 Its tenure ſure, its income is divine.

480

High-built abundance, heap on heap ! for what ?
 To breed new wants, and beggar us the more,
 Then make a richer ſcramble for the throng ?
 Soon as this feeble pulſe, which leaps ſo long,
 Almost by miracle, is tir'd with play,
 Like rubbiſh, from diſploding engines thrown,
 Our magazines of hoarded trifles fly ;
 Fly diſverſe ; fly to foreigners, to foes ;
 New maſters court, and call the former fool,
 (How juſtly !) for dependence on their ſtay.
 Wide ſcatter, firſt our playthings, then our duſt.

485

490

Doſt court abundance for the ſake of peace ?
 Learn, and lament thy ſelf-defeated ſcheme.
 Riches enable to be richer ſtill,
 And richer ſtill what mortal can reſiſt ?
 Thus Wealth (a cruel taſkmaſter !) enjoins
 New toils, ſucceeding toils, an endleſs train !
 And murders Peace, which taught it firſt to ſhine,
 The poor are half as wretched as the rich,
 Whoſe proud and painful privilege it is
 At once to bear a double load of woe ;
 To feel the ſtings of envy and of want,
 Outrageous want ! both Indies cannot cure.

495

505

A competence is vital to content :
 Much wealth is corpulence, if not diſeaſe ;
 Sick, or incumber'd, is our happineſs.
 A competence is all we can enjoy,
 O be content, where heaven can give no more !
 More, like a ſlaſh of water from a lock,
 Quickens our ſpirit's movement for an hour,
 But ſoon its force is ſpent, nor riſe our joys
 Above our native temper's common ſtream.
 Hence diſappointment lurks in ev'ry prize,
 As bees in flow'rs, and ſtings us with ſucceſs.

510

515

The rich man, who denies it, proudly feigns,
 Nor knows the wiſe are privy to the lie.
 Much learning ſhews how little mortals know ;

Much wealth, how little worldlings can enjoy ! 520

At best it babies us with endless toys,
And keeps us children till we drop to dust.

As monkeys at a mirror stand amaz'd,
They fail to find what they so plainly see ;
Thus men, in shining riches, see the face 525
Of Happiness, nor know it is a shade ;
But gaze, and touch, and peep, and peep again,
And wish, and wonder it is absent still.

How few can rescue opulence from want !

Who lives to nature rarely can be poor ; 530
Who lives to fancy never can be rich.

Poor is the man in debt ; the man of gold,
In debt to fortune, trembles at her power :
The man of reason smiles at her and death.
O what a patrimony this ! a being 535
Of such inherent strength and majesty,
Not worlds possess can raise it ; worlds destroy'd
Can't injure ; which holds on its glorious course !
When thine, O Nature ! ends ; too blest to mourn
Creation's obsequies. What treasure this ! 540
The monarch is a beggar to the man.

Immortal ! ages past, yet nothing gone !
Morn without eve ! a race without a goal !
Unshorten'd by progression infinite !
Futurity for ever future ! life 545
Beginning still were computation ends !

'Tis the description of a deity !
'Tis the description of the meanest slave !
The meanest slave dares then Lorenzo scorn ?
The meanest slave thy sov'reign glory shares. 550
Proud Youth ! fastidious of the lower world !

Man's lawful pride includes Humility ;
Stoops to the lowest ; is too great to find
Inferiors ! all immortal ! brothers all !
Proprietors eternal of thy love. 555

Immortal ! what can strike the sense so strong
As this the soul ? it thunders to the thought,
Reason amazes, gratitude o'erwhelms ;
No more we slumber on the brink of Fate ;

Rous'd at the sound, th' exulting soul ascends, 560
And breathes her native air, an air that feeds
Ambitions high, and fans ethereal fires ;
Quick kindles all that is divine within us,
Nor leaves one loit'ring thought beneath the stars.

Has not Lorenzo's bosom caught the flame ? 565

Immortal ! were but one immortal, how
Would others envy ! how would thrones adore !
Because 'tis common, is the blessing lost ?
How this ties up the bounteous hand of heav'n !
O vain, vain, vain, all else ! eternity ! 570

A glorious and a needful refuge that,
From vile imprisonment in abject views.

'Tis immortality, 'tis that alone,
Amid life's pains, abasements, emptiness,
The soul can comfort, elevate, and fill : 575

That only and that amply this performs ;
Lifts us above life's pains, her joys above ;
Their terror those, and these their lustre lose ;
Eternity depending covers all ;
Eternity depending all achieves ; 580

Sets earth at distance ; casts her into shades ;
Blends her distinctions ; abrogates her pow'rs ;
The low, the lofty, joyous, and severe,
Fortune's dread frowns, and fascinating smiles,
Make one promiscuous and neglected heap, 585

The man beneath ; if I may call him man,
Whom Immortality's full force inspires.
Nothing terrestrial touches his high thought ;
Suns shine unseen, and thunders roll unheard,
By minds quite conscious of their high descent, 590

Their present province, and their future prize ;
Divinely darting upward ev'ry wish,
Warm on the wing, in glorious absence lost !

Doubt you this truth ? why labours your belief ?
If earth's whole orb, by some due distant eye 595

Were seen at once, her tow'ring Alps would sink,
And levell'd Atlas leave an even sphere.

Thus earth, and all that earthly minds admire,
Is swallow'd in Eternity's vast round,

To that stupendous view, when souls awake, 600
 So large of late, so mountainous to man,
 Time's toys subside, and equal all below.

Enthusiastic this? then all are weak
 But rank enthusiasts. To this godlike height
 Some souls have soar'd, or martyrs ne'er had bled:
 And all may do what has by man been done. 606

Who, beaten by these sublunary storms,
 Boundless, interminable joys can weigh
 Unraptur'd, unexalted, uninflam'd?
 What slave unblest'd, who from to-morrow's dawn 610
 Expects an empire? he forgets his chain,
 And, thron'd in thought, his absent sceptre waves.

And what a sceptre waits us! what a throne!
 Her own immense appointments to compute,
 Or comprehend her high prerogatives, 615
 In this her dark minority, how toils,
 How vainly pants, the human soul divine!
 Too great the bounty seems for earthly joy:
 What heart but trembles at so strange a bliss?

In spite of all the truths the Muse has sung, 620
 Ne'er to be priz'd enough! enough revolv'd!
 Are there who wrap the world so close about them,
 They see no farther than the clouds, and dance
 On heedless Vanity's fantastic toe,
 Till, stumbling at a straw, in their career, 625
 Headlong they plunge, where end both dance and song?
 Are there, Lorenzo? is it possible?
 Are there on earth (let me not call them men)
 Who lodge a soul immortal in their breasts,
 Unconscious as the mountain of its ore, 630
 Or rock of its inestimable gem?

When rocks shall melt, and mountains vanish, these
 Shall know their treasure; treasure then no more.

Are there (still more amazing!) who resist
 The rising thought? who smother, in its birth, 635
 The glorious truth? who struggle to be brutes?
 Who thro' this bosom-barrier burst their way,
 And, with revers'd ambition, strive to sink?
 Who labour downwards thro' th' opposing pow'rs

Of instinct, reason, and the world against them, 640
To dismal hopes, and shelter in the shock
Of endless night? night darker than the grave's?
Who fight the proofs of immortality?
With horrid zeal, and execrable arts,
Work all their engines, level their black fires, 645
To blot from man this attribute divine,
(Than vital blood far dearer to the wise)
Blasphemers, and rank Atheists to themselves?
To contradict them, see all Nature rise!
What object, what event, the moon beneath, 650
But argues, or endears, an after-scene?
To reason proves, or weds it to desire?
All things proclaim it needful; some advance
One precious step beyond, and prove it sure.
A thousand arguments swarm round my pen, 655
From heav'n, and earth, and man. Indulge a few,
By Nature, as her common habit worn;
So pressing Providence a truth to teach,
Which truth untaught, all other truths were vain.
Thou! whose all-providential eye surveys, 660
Whose hand directs, whose spirit fills and warms
Creation, and holds empire far beyond!
Eternity's Inhabitant august!
Of two eternities amazing Lord!
One past ere man's or angel's had begun, 665
Aid! while I rescue from the foe's assault
Thy glorious immortality in man;
A theme for ever, and for all, of weight,
Of moment infinite! but relish'd most
By those who love thee most, who most adore. 670
Nature, thy daughter, ever-changing birth
Of thee the Great Immutable, to man
Speaks wisdom; is his oracle supreme;
And he who most consults her is most wise.
Lorenzo! to this heav'nly Delphos haste, 675
And come back all-immortal, all divine.
Look Nature thro', 'tis revolution all;
All change, no death: day follows night, and night
The dying day; stars rise, and set, and rise:

Earth takes the example. See, the Summer gay, 680
 With her green chaplet and ambrosial flow'rs,
 Droops into pallid Autumn: Winter grey,
 Horrid with frost, and turbulent with storm,
 Blows Autumn, and his golden fruits, away ;
 Then melts into the Spring: soft Spring, with breath
 Favonian, from warm chambers of the south, 686
 Recals the first. All, to re-flourish, fades :
 As in a wheel all sinks to re-ascend :
 Emblems of man, who passes, not expires.

With this minute distinction, emblems just, 690
 Nature revolves, but man advances ; both
 Eternal : that a circle, this a line :
 That gravitates, this soars. Th' aspiring soul,
 Ardent and tremulous, like flame, ascends,
 Zeal and Humility her wings, to heav'n. 695
 The world of matter, with its various forms,
 All dies into new life. Life born from death
 Rolls the vast mass, and shall for ever roll.
 No single atom, once in being, lost,
 With change of council charges the Most High. 700

What hence infers Lorenzo? can it be?
 Matter immortal? and shall spirit die?
 Above the nobler shall less noble rise?
 Shall man alone, for whom all else revives,
 No resurrection know? shall man alone, 705
 Imperial man! be sown in barren ground,
 Less privileg'd than grain on which he feeds?
 Is man, in whom alone is pow'r to prize
 The bliss of being, or, with previous pain,
 Deplore its period, by the spleen of Fate 710
 Severely doom'd Death's single unredeem'd?

If Nature's revolution speaks aloud
 In her gradation, hear her louder still.
 Look Nature through, 'tis neat gradation all.
 By what minute degrees her scale ascends! 715
 Each middle nature join'd, at each extreme,
 To that above it join'd, to that beneath,
 Parts into parts reciprocally shot,
 Abhor divorce, What love of union reigns!

Here dormant matter waits a call to life ;
Half-life, half-death, join there : here life and sense,
There sense from reason steals a glimm'ring ray :
Reason shines out in man. But how preserv'd
The chain unbroken upward, to the realms
Of incorporeal life ? those realms of bliss 725
Where Death hath no dominion ? Grant a make
Half-mortal, half-immortal ; earthy part,
And part ethereal : grant the soul of man
Eternal, or in man the series ends.
Wide yawns the gap ; connexion is no more ; 730
Check'd Reason halts ; her next step wants support ;
Striving to climb, she tumbles from her scheme,
A scheme Analogy pronounc'd so true :
Analogy ! man's surest guide below.

Thus far all Nature calls on thy belief ; 735
And will Lorenzo, careless of the call,
False attestation on all Nature charge,
Rather than violate his league with Death ?
Renounce his reason, rather than renounce
The dust belov'd, and run the risk of heav'n ? 740
O what indignity to deathless souls !
What treason to the majesty of man !
Of man immortal ! Hear the lofty style :
“ If so decreed, th' Almighty will be done.
“ Let earth dissolve, yon pond'rous orbs descend, 745
“ And grind us into dust. The soul is safe ;
“ The man emerges : mounts above the wreck,
“ As tow'ring flame from Nature's fun'ral pyre ;
“ O'er devastation, as a gainer, smiles ;
“ His charter, his inviolable rights, 750
“ Well-pleas'd to learn from thunder's impotence,
“ Death's pointless darts, and Hell's defeated storms.”

But these chimeras touch not thee, Lorenzo !
The glories of the world thy sev'nfold shield.
Other ambition than of crowns in air,
And superlunary felicities,
Thy bosom warm. I'll cool it if I can,
And turn those glories that enchant against thee.

What ties thee to this life proclaims the next.
If wise, the cause that wounds thee is thy cure. 760

Come, my ambitious! let us mount together,
(To mount Lorenzo never can refuse)
And from the clouds, where Pride delights to dwell,
Look down on earth.—What seest thou? wondrous
Terrestrial wonders, that eclipse the skies. [things!
What lengths of labour'd lands! what loaded seas! 766

Loaded by man for pleasure, wealth, or war!
Seas, winds, and planets, into service brought,
His art acknowledge, and promote his ends.
Nor can th' eternal rocks his will withstand: 770

What levell'd mountains! and what lifted vales!
O'er vales and mountains sumptuous cities swell,
And gild our landscape with their glitt'ring spires.
Some 'mid the won'dring waves majestic rise,
And Neptune holds a mirror to their charms. 775

Far greater still! (what cannot mortal might?)
See wide dominions ravish'd from the deep!
The narrow'd deep with indignation foams.
Or southward turn, to delicate and grand,
The finer arts there ripen in the sun. 780

How the tall temples, as to meet their gods,
Ascend the skies! the proud triumphal arch
Shews us half heav'n beneath its ample bend.
High thro' mid air here streams are taught to flow;
Whole rivers there, laid by in basons sleep. 785

Here plains turn oceans; there vast oceans join
Thro' kingdoms channell'd deep from shore to shore,
And chang'd creation takes its face from man.
Beats thy brave breast for formidable scenes,
Where fame and empire wait upon the sword? 790

See fields in blood; here naval thunders rise;
Britannia's voice! that awes the world to peace.
How yon enormous mole projecting breaks
The mid sea, furious waves! their roar amidst
Out speaks the Deity, and says, "O Main! 795

"Thus far, nor farther; new restraints obey."
Earth's disembowel'd! measur'd are the skies!
Stars are detected in their deep recess!

Creation widens ! vanquish'd Nature yields

Her secrets are extorted ! art prevails !

800

What monument of genius, spirit, pow'r !

And now, Lorenzo ! raptur'd at this scene,

Whose glories render heav'n superfluous ! say

Whose footsteps these ?—Immortals have been here ;

Could less than souls immortal this have done ? 805

Earth's cover'd o'er with proofs of souls immortal,

And proofs of immortality forgot.

To flatter thy grand foible, I confess

These are Ambition's works ; and these are great :

But this, the least immortal souls can do, 810

Transcend them all.—But what can these transcend ?

Dost ask me what ? one sigh for the distress.

What then for Infidels ? a deeper sigh.

'Tis moral grandeur makes the mighty man.

How little they who think aught great below ? 815

All our ambitions death defeats but one,

And that it crowns.—Here cease we ; but, ere long,

More pow'rful proof shall take the field against thee,

Stronger than death, and smiling at the tomb. 819



PREFACE.

AS we are at war with the power, it were well if we were at war with the manners, of France. A land of levity is a land of guilt. A serious mind is the native soil of every virtue, and the single character that does true honour to mankind. The soul's immortality has been the favourite theme with the serious of all ages: nor is it strange; it is a subject by far the most interesting and important that can enter the mind of man. Of highest moment this subject always was, and always will be: yet this its highest moment seems to admit of increase at this day: a sort of occasional importance is superadded to the natural weight of it, if that opinion which is advanced in the preface to the preceding Night be just. It is there supposed, that all our infidels, whatever scheme, for argument's sake, and to keep themselves in countenance, they patronize, are betrayed into their deplorable error by some doubts of their immortality at the bottom: and the more I consider this point, the more I am persuaded of the truth of that opinion. Though the distrust of a futurity is a strange error, yet it is an error into which bad men may naturally be distressed; for it is impossible to bid defiance to final ruin without some refuge in imagination, some presumption of escape. And what presumption is there? There are but two in nature; but two within the compass of human thought; and these are, that either God will not, or cannot, punish. Considering the divine attributes, the first is too gross to be digested by our strongest wishes; and, since omnipotence is as much a divine attribute as holiness, that God cannot punish is as absurd a supposition as the former. God certainly can punish as long as wicked men exist. In non-existence, therefore, is their only refuge; and, consequently, non-existence is their strongest wish: and strong wishes have a strange influence on our opinions; they bias the judgment in a manner almost incredible. And since on this member of their alternative there are some very small appearances in their favour, and none at all on the other,

they catch at this reed—they lay hold on this chimera, to save themselves from the shock and horror of an immediate and absolute despair.

On reviewing my subject, by the light which this argument, and others of like tendency, threw upon it, I was more inclined than ever to pursue it, as it appeared to me to strike directly at the main root of all our infidelity. In the following pages it is, accordingly, pursued at large, and some arguments for immortality, new at least to me, are ventured on in them. There, also, the writer has made an attempt to set the gross absurdities and horrors of annihilation in a fuller and more affecting view than is (I think) to be met with elsewhere.

The gentlemen for whose sake this attempt was chiefly made, profess great admiration for the wisdom of heathen antiquity; what pity it is they are not sincere! If they were sincere, how would it mortify them to consider with what contempt and abhorrence their notions would have been received by those whom they so much admire? what degree of contempt and abhorrence would fall to their share, may be conjectured by the following matter of fact, (in my opinion) extremely memorable. Of all their heathen worthies, Socrates (it is well known) was the most guarded, dispassionate and composed; yet this great master of temper was angry, and angry at his last hour; and angry with his friend; and angry for what deserved acknowledgment; angry for a right and tender instance of true friendship towards him. Is not this surprising? What could be the cause? The cause was for his honour; it was a truly noble, though, perhaps, a too punctilious regard for immortality: for his friend asking him, with such an affectionate concern as became a friend, where he should deposit his remains? it was resented by Socrates, as implying a dishonourable supposition that he could be so mean as to have regard for any thing, even in himself, that was not immortal.

This fact, well considered, would make our infidels withdraw their admiration from Socrates, or make them endeavour, by their imitation of this illustrious example, to share his glory; and, consequently, it would incline them to peruse the following pages with candour and impartiality, which is all I desire, and that for their sakes; for I am persuaded that an unprejudiced infidel must necessarily receive some advantageous impressions from them.

Contents.

In the Sixth Night arguments were drawn from nature in proof of immortality: here others are drawn from man: from his discontent, Ver. 29; from his passions and powers, 64; from the gradual growth of reason, 81; from his fear of death, 86; from the nature of hope, 104, and of virtue, 139, &c. From knowledge and love, as being the most essential properties of the soul, 253; from the order of creation, 290, &c. from the nature of ambition, 337, &c. avarice, 460; pleasure, 477; a digression on the grandeur of the passions, 521. Immortality alone renders our present state intelligible, 545. An objection from the Stoics—disbelief of immortality answered, 585. Endless questions unresolvable, but on supposition of our immortality, 606. The natural, most melancholy, and pathetic complaint of a worthy man, under the persuasion of no futurity, 653, &c. The gross absurdities and horrors of annihilation urged home on Lorenzo, 842, &c. The soul's vast importance, 990, &c. from whence it arises, 1078. The difficulty of being an infidel, 1131, the infamy, 1148, the cause, 1183, and the character, 1203, of an infidel state. What true free-thinking is, 1217. The necessary punishment of the false, 1271. Man's ruin is from himself, 1303. An infidel accuses himself of guilt and hypocrisy; and that of the worst sort, 1319. His obligation to christians, 1337. What danger he incurs by Virtue, 1345. Vice recommended to him, 1364. His high pretences to virtue and benevolence exploded, 1373. The conclusion, on the nature of faith, 1427. Reason, 1439; and hope, 1443; with an apology for this attempt, 1470.

H EAVEN gives the needful, but neglected call.
 What day, what hour, but knocks at human
 To wake the soul to sense of future scenes? [hearts,
 Deaths stand, like Mercuries, in ev'ry way,
 And kindly point us to our journey's end. 5
 Pope, who couldst make immortals! art thou dead?
 I give thee joy; nor will I take my leave,
 So soon to follow. Man but dives in death,
 Dives from the sun, in fairer day to rise,
 The grave his subterranean road to bliss. 10
 Yes, infinite indulgence plann'd it so;
 Thro' various parts our glorious story runs;
 Time gives the preface, endless age unrolls
 The volume (ne'er unroll'd) of human fate.

This earth and skies* already have proclaim'd. 15
 The world's a prophecy of worlds to come,
 And who what God foretels (who speaks in things
 Still louder than in words) shall dare deny?
 If Nature's arguments appear too weak,
 Turn a new leaf, and stronger read in man. 20
 If man sleeps on, untaught by what he sees,
 Can he prove infidel to what he feels?
 He, whose blind thought futurity denies,
 Unconscious bears, Bellerophon! like thee,

His own indictment; he condemns himself;
Who reads his bosom, reads immortal life;
Or Nature there, imposing on her sons,
Has written fables: man was made a lie.

Why discontent for ever harbour'd there?
Incurable consumption of our peace!

30

Resolve me why the cottager and king,
He whom sea-sever'd realms obey, and he
Who steals his whole dominion from the waste,
Repelling winter blasts with mud and straw,
Disquieted alike, draw sigh for sigh,
In fate so distant, in complaint so near?

35

Is it that things terrestrial can't content:
Deep in rich pasture will thy flocks complain?
Not so: but to their master is deny'd

To share their sweet serene. Man, ill at ease

40

In this, not his own place, this foreign field,

Where Nature foddors him with other food

Than was ordain'd his cravings to suffice,

Poor in abundance, famish'd at a feast,

Sighs on for something more, when most enjoy'd. 45

Is heaven then kinder to thy flocks than thee?

Not so; thy pasture richer, but remote;

In part remote; for that remoter part

Man bleats from instinct, though, perhaps, debauch'd

By sense, his reason sleeps, nor dreams the cause. 50

The cause how obvious, when his reason wakes!

His grief is but his grandeur in disguise,

And discontent is immortality.

Shall sons of æther, shall the blood of heaven,

Set up their hopes on earth, and stable here,

55

With brutal acquiescence, in the mire?

Lorenzo! no; they shall be nobly pain'd;

The glorious foreigners, distress'd, shall sigh

On thrones, and thou congratulate the sigh.

Man's misery declares him born for bliss;

60

His anxious heart asserts the truth I sing,

And gives the sceptic in his head the lie.

Our heads, our hearts, our passions, and our powers,
Speak the same language; call us to the skies:

Unripen'd these, in this inclement clime, 65
Scarce rise above conjecture and mistake;
And for this land of trifles those, too strong,
Tumultuous rise, and tempest human life.
What prize on earth can pay us for the storm?
Meet objects for our passions heaven ordain'd, 70
Objects that challenge all their fire, and leave
No fault but in defect. Bless'd heaven! avert
A bounded ardour for unbounded bliss!
O for a bliss unbounded! far beneath
A soul immortal is a mortal joy. 75
Nor are our powers to perish immature;
But, after feeble effort here, beneath
A brighter sun, and in a nobler soil,
Transplanted from this sublunary bed,
Shall flourish fair, and put forth all their bloom. 80
Reason progressive, instinct is complete:
Swift Instinct leaps; slow Reason feebly climbs.
Brutes soon their zenith reach; their little all
Flows in at once; in ages they no more
Could know, or do, or covet, or enjoy. 85
Were man to live coeval with the sun,
The patriarch pupil would be learning still,
Yet, dying, leave his lesson half-unlearn'd.
Men perish in advance, as if the sun
Should set ere noon, in eastern oceans drown'd; 90
If fit with dim illustrious to compare,
The sun's meridian with the soul of man.
To man, why, step-dame Nature! so severe?
Why thrown aside thy masterpiece half-wrought,
While meaner efforts thy last hand enjoy? 95
Or if, abortively, poor man must die,
Nor reach what reach he might, why die in dread?
Why curs'd with foresight? wise to misery?
Why of his proud prerogative the prey?
Why less pre-eminent in rank than pain? 100
His immortality alone can tell,
Full ample fund to balance all amiss,
And turn the scale in favour of the just!

His immortality alone can solve
 That darkest of enigmas, human hope, 105
 Of all the darkest, if at death we die.
 Hope, eager Hope, the assassin of our joy,
 All present blessings treading under foot,
 Is scarce a milder tyrant than Despair.
 With no past toils content, still planning new, 110
 Hope turns us o'er to Death alone for ease.
 Possession why more tasteless than pursuit?
 Why is a wish far dearer than a crown?
 That wish accomplish'd, why the grave of bliss?
 Because in the great future bury'd deep, 115
 Beyond our plans of empire and renown,
 Lies all that man with ardour should pursue;
 And he who made him bent him to the right.

Man's heart th' Almighty to the future sets,
 By secret and inviolable springs, 120
 And makes his hope his sublunary joy.
 Man's heart eats all things, and is hungry still;
 "More, more!" the glutton cries: for something new
 So rages appetite, if man can't mount,
 He will descend. He starves on the possess. 125
 Hence, the world's master, from ambition's spire,
 In Caprea plung'd; and div'd beneath the brute.
 In that rank sty why wallow'd Empire's son
 Supreme? Because he could no higher fly;
 His riot was ambition in despair. 130

Old Rome consulted birds; Lorenzo! thou
 With more success the flight of Hope survey;
 Of restless Hope, for ever on the wing.
 High perch'd o'er ev'ry thought that falcon sits,
 To fly at all that rises in her sight; 135
 And never stooping, but to mount again
 Next moment, she betrays her aim's mistake,
 And owns her quarry lodg'd beyond the grave.

There should it fail us, (it must fail us there,
 If being fails) more mournful riddles rise, 140
 And Virtue vies with Hope in mystery.
 Why Virtue? were its praise, its being, fled?
 Virtue is true self-interest pursu'd;

What true self-interest of quite-mortal man !
 To close with all that makes him happy here. 145
 If vice (as sometimes) is our friend on earth,
 Then vice is virtue ; 'tis our sov'reign good.
 In self applause is virtue's golden prize ?
 No self-applause attends it on thy scheme.
 Whence self-applause ? from conscience of the right ;
 And what is right but means of happiness ? 151
 No means of happiness when virtue yields ;
 That basis failing, falls the building too,
 And lays in ruin ev'ry virtuous joy.

The rigid guardian of a blameless heart, 155
 So long rever'd, so long reputed wise,
 Is weak, with rank knight-errandies o'er-run.
 Why beats thy bosom with illustrious dreams
 Of self-exposure, laudable and great ?
 Of gallant enterprise, and glorious death ? 160
 Die for thy country ?—thou romantic fool !
 Seize, seize the plank thyself, and let her sink.
 Thy country ! what to thee ?—the godhead, what ?
 (I speak with awe !) tho' he should bid thee bleed,
 If, with thy blood, thy final hope is spilt, 165
 Nor can Omnipotence reward the blow :
 Be deaf ; preserve thy being ; disobey.

Nor is it disobedience. Know, Lorenzo !
 Whate'er th' Almighty's subsequent command,
 His first command is this :—" Man, love thyself."
 In this alone free agents are not free. 171
 Existence is the basis, bliss the prize ;
 If virtue costs existence, 'tis a crime,
 Bold violation of our law supreme,
 Black suicide, tho' nations, which consult 175
 Their gain at thy expence, resound applause.

Since virtue's recompence is doubtful here,
 If man dies wholly, well may we demand
 Why is man suffer'd to be good in vain ?
 Why to be good in vain is man enjoin'd ? 180
 Why to be good in vain is man betray'd ?
 Betray'd by traitors lodg'd in his own breast,
 By sweet complacencies from virtue felt ?

Why whispers Nature lies on Virtue's part;
 Or if blind Instinct (which assumes the name
 Of sacred Conscience) plays the fool in man,
 Why Reason made accomplice in the cheat?
 Why are the wisest loudest in her praise?
 Can man by reason's beam be led astray?
 Or, at his peril, imitate his God?

185

190

Since virtue sometimes ruins us on earth,
 Or both are true, or man survives the grave.

Or man survives the grave, or own, Lorenzo,
 Thy boast supreme a wild absurdity.

Dauntless thy spirit, cowards are thy scorn.

195

Grant man immortal, and thy scorn is just.

The man immortal, rationally brave,

Dares rush on death—because he cannot die:

But if man loses all when life is lost,

He lives a coward, or a fool expires.

200

A daring infidel, (and such there are,

From pride, example, lucre, rage, revenge,

Or pure heroical defect of thought)

Of all earth's madmen most deserves a chain.

When to the grave we follow the renown'd

205

For valour, virtue, science, all we love,

And all we praise; for worth whose noontide beam,

Enabling us to think in higher style,

Mends our ideas of ethereal pow'rs,

Dream we that lustre of the moral world

210

Goes out in stench, and rottenness the close?

Why was he wise to know, and warm to praise,

And strenuous to transcribe, in human life,

The Mind Almighty? Could it be that Fate,

Just when the lineaments began to shine,

215

And dawn the Deity, should snatch the draught,

With night eternal blot it out, and give

The skies alarm, lest angels too might die?

If human souls, why not angelic too,

Extinguish'd, and a solitary God,

220

O'er ghastly ruin, frowning from his throne?

Shall we this moment gaze on God in man,

The next lose man for ever in the dust?

From dust we disengage, or man mistakes,
 And there, where least his judgment fears a flaw, 225
 Wisdom and worth how boldly he commends!
 Wisdom and worth are sacred names; rever'd
 Where not embrac'd; applauded! deify'd!
 Why not compassion'd too? If spirits die,
 Both are calamities, inflicted both 230
 To make us but more wretched. Wisdom's eye
 Acute, for what? to spy more miseries;
 And worth so recompens'd, new points their stings.
 Or man surmounts the grave, or gain is loss,
 And worth exalted humbles us the more. 235
 Thou wilt not patronize a scheme that makes
 Weakness and vice the refuge of mankind.

"Has virtue then no joys?" - Yes, joys dear bought.
 Talk ne'er so long, in this imperfect state
 Virtue and vice are at eternal war. 240
 Virtue's a combat; and who fights for nought,
 Or for precarious, or for small reward?
 Who virtue's self-reward so loud resound,
 Would take degrees angelic here below,
 And virtue, while they compliment, betray, 245
 By feeble motives and unfaithful guards.
 The crown, th' unfading crown, her soul inspires:
 'Tis that, and that alone, can countervail
 The body's treach'ries and the world's assaults.
 On earth's poor pay our famish'd virtue dies: 250
 Truth incontestable! in spite of all
 Ast Bayle has preach'd, or a Voltaire believ'd.

In man the more we dive, the more we see
 Heav'n's signet stamping an immortal make.
 Dive to the bottom of his soul, the base 255
 Sustaining all, what find we? knowledge, love.
 As light and heat, essential to the sun,
 These to the soul: and why, if souls expire?
 How little lovely here? how little known?
 Small knowledge we dig up with endless toil, 260
 And love unfeign'd may purchase perfect hate.
 Why starv'd, on earth, our angel-appetites,
 While brutal are indulg'd their fulsome fill?

Were then capacities divine conferr'd,
As a mock-diadem, in savage sport, 265
Rank insult of our pompous poverty,
Which reaps but pain from seeming claims so fair?
In future age lies no redress? and shuts
Eternity the door on our complaint?
If so, for what strange ends were mortals made! 270

The worst to wallow, and the best to weep;
The man who merits most must most complain:
Can we conceive a disregard in Heav'n,
What the worst perpetrate, or best endure?

This cannot be. To love and know, in man 275
Is boundless appetite, and boundless pow'r;
And these demonstrate boundless objects too.
Objects, pow'rs, appetities, Heav'n suits in all,
Nor, Nature through, e'er violates this sweet
Eternal concord on her tuneful string. 280

Is man the sole exception from her laws?
Eternity struck off from human hope,
(I speak with truth, but veneration too)
Man is a monster, the reproach of Heav'n,
A stain, a dark impenetrable cloud 285
On Nature's beauteous aspect, and deforms
(Amazing blot!) deforms her with her lord.
If such is man's allotment, what is heav'n?
Or own the soul immortal, or blaspheme.

Or own the soul immortal, or invert 290
All order. Go, mock-majesty! go, man!
And bow to thy superiors of the stall,
Thro' ev'ry scene of sense superior far:
They graze the turf untill'd; they drink the stream
Unbrew'd, and ever full, and unimbitter'd 295
With doubts, fears, fruitless hopes, regrets, despairs,
Mankind's peculiar! Reason's precious dower!
No foreign clime they ransack for their robes,
Nor brothers cite to the litigious bar;
Their good is good entire, unmix'd, unmarr'd; 300
They find a paradise in ev'ry field,
On boughs forbidden where no curses hang:
Their ill no more than strikes the sense, unstretch'd

By previous dread, or murmur in the rear :
 When the worst comes, it comes unfear'd ; one stroke
 Begins and ends their woe : they die but once ; 306
 Bless'd, incommunicable privilege ! for which
 Proud man, who rules the globe, and reads the stars,
 Philosopher or hero, sighs in vain.

Account for this prerogative in brutes. 310
 No day, no glimpse of day, to solve the knot,
 But what beams on it from eternity.
 O sole and sweet solution ! that unties
 The difficult, and softens the severe ;
 The cloud on Nature's beauteous face dispels ; 315
 Restores bright order ; casts the brute beneath,
 And re-inthrones us in supremacy
 Of joy, ev'n here. Admit immortal life,
 And virtue is knight errantry no more ;
 Each virtue brings in hand a golden dower, 320
 Far richer in reversion : Hope exults.
 And tho' much bitter in our cup is thrown,
 Predominates, and gives the taste of heav'n.
 O wherefore is the Deity so kind ?
 Astonishing beyond astonishment ! 325
 Heav'n our reward—for heav'n enjoy'd below.

Still unsubdu'd thy stubborn heart ?—for there
 The traitor lurks who doubts the truth I sing.
 Reason is guiltless : will alone rebels.
 What, in that stubborn heart, if I should find 330
 New unexpected witnesses against thee ?
 Ambition, Pleasure, and the love of gain !
 Canst thou suspect that these, which make the soul
 The slave of earth, should own her heir of heav'n ?
 Canst thou suspect what makes us disbelieve 335
 Our immortality should prove it sure ?

First, then, Ambition summon to the bar.
 Ambition's shame, extravagance, disgust,
 And inextinguishable nature, speak :
 Each much deposes : hear them in their turn. 340

Thy soul, how passionately fond of fame !
 How anxious that fond passion to conceal !
 We blush, detected in designs on praise,

Tho' for best deeds, and from the best of men;
And why? because immortal. Art divine
Has made the body tutor to the soul;
Heav'n kindly gives our blood a moral flow,
Bids it ascend the glowing cheek, and there
Upbraid that little heart's inglorious aim
Which stoops to court a character from man, 350
While o'er us, in tremendous judgment, sit
Far more than man, with endless praise and blame.

Ambition's boundless appetite outspeaks
The verdict of its shame. When souls take fire
At high presumptions of their own desert, 355
One age is poor applause: the mighty shout,
The thunder by the living few begun,
Late Time must echo, worlds unborn resound.
We wish our names eternally to live;
Wild dream! which ne'er had haunted human thought,
Had not our natures been eternal too. 361
Instinct points out an int'rest in hereafter,
But our blind reason sees not where it lies,
Or, seeing, gives the substance for the shade.

Fame is the shade of immortality, 365
And in itself a shadow: soon as caught
Contemn'd, it shrinks to nothing in the grasp.
Consult th' ambitious, 'tis ambition's cure.
"And is this all?" cry'd Cæsar, at his height,
Disgusted. This third proof ambition brings 370
Of immortality. The first in fame.
Observe him near, your envy will abate:
Sham'd at the disproportion vast between
The passion and the purchase, he will sigh
At such success, and blush at his renown. 375
And why? because far richer prize invites
His heart; far more illustrious glory calls;
It calls in whispers, yet the deafest hear.

And can Ambition a fourth proof supply?
It can, and stronger than the former three, 380
Yet quite o'erlook'd by some reputed wise.
Tho' disappointments in ambition pain,
And tho' success disgusts, yet still, Lorenzo!

In vain we strive to pluck it from our hearts,
 By Nature planted for the noblest ends. 385
 Absurd the fam'd advice to Pyrrhus giv'n,
 More prais'd than ponder'd; specious, but unsound:
 Sooner that hero's sword the world had quell'd,
 Than reason his ambition. Man must soar;
 An obstinate activity within, 390
 An insuppressive spring will toss him up
 In spite of Fortune's load. Not kings alone,
 Each villager has his ambition too.
 No sultan prouder than his fetter'd slave.
 Slaves build their little Babylons of straw, 395
 Echo the proud Assyrian in their hearts,
 And cry,—“Behold the wonders of my might!”
 And why? because immortal as their lord;
 And souls immortal must for ever heave
 At something great; the glitter or the gold; 400
 The praise of mortals, or the praise of heav'n.
 Nor absolutely vain is human praise,
 When human is supported by divine.
 I'll introduce Lorenzo to himself;
 Pleasure and Pride (bad masters!) share our hearts.
 As love of pleasure is ordain'd to guard 406
 And feed our bodies, and extend our race,
 The love of praise is planted to protect
 And propagate the glories of the mind.
 What is it, but the love of praise, inspires, 410
 Matures, refines, embellishes, exalts
 Earth's happiness? from that the delicate,
 The grand, the marvellous, of civil life,
 Want and convenience, underworkers, lay
 The basis on which love of glory builds. 415
 Nor is thy life, O Virtue! less in debt
 To praise, thy secret-stimulating friend.
 Were men not proud, what merit should we miss!
 Pride made the virtues of the Pagan world.
 Praise is the salt that seasons right to man, 420
 And whets his appetite for moral good.
 Thirst of applause is Virtue's second guard;
 Reason her first; but reason wants an aid;

Our private reason is a flatterer ;
 Thirst of applause calls public judgment in 425
 To poise our own, to keep an even scale,
 And give endanger'd Virtue fairer play.

Here a fifth proof arises, stronger still.

Why this so nice construction of our hearts ?
 These delicate moralities of sense ; 430

This constitutional reserve of aid
 To succour Virtue when our reason fails,
 If virtue, kept alive by care and toil,
 And oft the mark of injuries on earth,
 When labour'd to maturity (its bill 435
 Of disciplines and pains unpaid) must die ?

Why freighted rich to dash against a rock ?
 Were man to perish when most fit to live,
 O how mispent were all these stratagems,
 By skill divine inwoven in our frame ! 440

Where are heaven's holiness and mercy fled ?
 Laughs heaven, at once, at virtue and at man ?
 If not, why that discourag'd, this destroy'd ?

Thus far Ambition. What says Avarice ?

This her chief maxim which has long been thine : 445

“ The wise and wealthy are the same.”—I grant it.

To store up treasure, with incessant toil,
 This is man's province, this his highest praise :
 To this great end keen Instinct stings him on :
 To guide that Instinct, Reason, is thy charge ; 450

'Tis thine to tell us where true treasure lies ;
 But Reason, failing to discharge her trust,
 Or to the deaf discharging it in vain,
 A blunder follows, and blind Industry,

Gall'd by the spur, but stranger to the course, 455
 (The course where stakes of more than gold are won)

O'erloading with the cares of distant age

The jaded spirits of the present hour,

Provides for an eternity below.

“ Thou shalt not covet,” is a wise command, 460

But bounded to the wealth the sun surveys.

Look farther, the command stands quite revers'd,

And av'rice is a virtue most divine.

Is faith a refuge for our happiness?
Most sure; and is it not for reason too? 465
Nothing this world unriddles, but the next.
Whence inextinguishable thirst of gain?
From inextinguishable life in man:
Man, if not meant by worth to reach the skies,
Had wanted wing to fly so far in guilt. 470
Sour grapes, I grant, ambition, avarice;
Yet still their root is immortality:
These its wild growths, so bitter and so base,
(Pain and reproach!) religion can reclaim,
Refine, exalt, throw down their pois'nous lee, 475
And make them sparkle in the bowl of bliss.

See, the third witness laughs at bliss remote,
And falsely promises an Eden here:
Truth she shall speak for once, tho' prone to lie,
A common cheat, and Pleasure is her name. 480
To Pleasure never was Lorenzo deaf;
Then hear her now, now first thy real friend.

Since Nature made us not more fond than proud
Of happiness, (whence hypocrites in joy!
Makers of mirth! artificers of smiles!) 485
Why should the joy most poignant sense affords
Burn us with blushes, and rebuke our pride?—
Those heaven-born blushes tell us man descends,
E'en in the zenith of his earthly bliss:
Should reason take her infidel repose, 490
This honest instinct speaks our lineage high;
This instinct calls on darkness to conceal
Our rapturous relation to the stalls.
Our glory covers us with noble shame,
And he that's unconfounded is unmann'd. 495
The man that blushes is not quite a brute.
Thus far with thee, Lorenzo! will I close,
Pleasure is good, and man for pleasure made;
But pleasure full of glory as of joy;
Pleasure which neither blushes nor expires. 500

The witnesses are heard, the cause is o'er;
Let Conscience file the sentence in her court:

Dearer than deeds that half a realm convey,
Thus seal'd by Truth th' authentic record runs.

“ Know all ; know Infidels,—unapt to know ! 505
 “ 'Tis immortality your nature solves ;
 “ 'Tis immortality deciphers man,
 “ And opens all the myst'ries of his make :
 “ Without it half his instincts are a riddle ;
 “ Without it all his virtues are a dream : 510
 “ His very crimes attest his dignity ;
 “ His fateless thirst of pleasure, gold, and fame,
 “ Declares him born for blessings infinite.
 “ What less than infinite makes unabsurd
 “ Passions, which all on earth but more inflames ?
 “ Fierce passions, so mismeasur'd to this scene, 516
 “ Stretch'd out, like eagles' wings, beyond our nest,
 “ Far, far beyond the worth of all below,
 “ For earth too large, presage a nobler flight,
 “ And evidence our title to the skies.” 520

Ye gentle Theologues of calmer kind,
Whose constitution dictates to your pen,
Who, cold yourselves, think ardour comes from hell !
Think not our passions from corruption sprung,
Tho' to corruption now they lend their wings : 525
That is their mistress, not their mother. All
(And justly) reason deem divine : I see,
I feel a grandeur in the passions too,
Which speaks their high descent and glorious end ;
Which speaks them rays of an eternal fire : 530
In Paradise itself they burnt as strong
Ere Adam fell, tho' wiser in their aim.
Like the proud Eastern, struck by Providence,
What tho' our passions are run mad, and stoop,
With low terrestrial appetite, to graze 53
On trash, on toys, dethron'd from high desire ?
Yet still, thro' their disgrace, no feeble ray
Of greatness shines, and tells us whence they fell :
But these (like that fall'n monarch when reclaim'd)
When reason moderates the rein aright,
Shall re-ascend, remount their former sphere,
Where once they soar'd illustrious, ere seduc'd,

By wanton Eve's debauch, to stroll on earth,
And set the sublunary world on fire.

But grant their frenzy lasts, their frenzy fails 545
To disappoint one providential end

For which heaven blew up ardour in our hearts.

Were Reason silent, boundless Passion speaks

A future scene of boundless objects too,

And brings glad tidings of eternal day. 550

Eternal day! 'tis that enlightens all,

And all, by that enlighten'd, proves it sure.

Consider man as an immortal being,

Intelligible all, and all is great:

A crystalline transparency prevails, 555

And strikes full lustre through the human sphere:

Consider man as mortal, all is dark

And wretched; Reason weeps at the survey.

The learn'd Lorenzo cries, "And let her weep;

"Weak modern Reason: ancient times were wise, 560

"Authority, that venerable guide,

"Stands on my part; the fam'd Athenian porch

"(And who for wisdom so renown'd as they?)

"Deny'd this immortality to man."

I grant it; but affirm they prov'd it too. 565

A riddle this!—Have patience; I'll explain.

What noble vanities, what moral flights,

Glitt'ring thro' their romantic wisdom's page,

Make us, at once, despise them, and admire?

Fable is flat to these high season'd fires; 570

They leave th' extravagance of song below.

"Flesh shall not feel, or, feeling, shall enjoy

"The dagger or the rack; to them alike

"A bed of roses or the burning bull."

In men exploding all beyond the grave, 575

Strange doctrine this! as doctrine it was strange,

But not as prophecy; for such it prov'd,

And, to their own amazement, was fulfill'd:

They feign'd a firmness, Christians need not feign.

The Christian truly triumph'd in the flame; 580

The stoic saw, in double wonder lost,

Wonder at them, and wonder at himself,

To find the bold adventures of his thought
Not bold, and that he strove to lie in vain.

Whence, then, those thoughts? those tow'ring
thoughts, that flew 585
Such monstrous heights?—From instinct and from
The glorious instinct of a deathless soul, [pride.
Confus'dly conscious of her dignity,
Suggested truths they could not understand.

In Lust's dominion, and in Passion's storm, 590
Truth's system broken, scatter'd fragments lay,
As light in chaos, glimm'ring thro' the gloom:
Smit with the pomp of lofty sentiments,
Pleas'd Pride proclaim'd what Reason disbeliev'd.
Pride, like the Delphic priestess, with a swell 595
Rav'd nonsense, destin'd to be future sense,
When life immortal, in full day, should shine,
And Death's dark shadows fly the gospel sun.
They spoke what nothing but immortal souls
Could speak; and thus the truth they question'd prov'd.

Can then absurdities, as well as crimes, 601
Speak man immortal? All things speak him so.
Much has been urg'd; and dost thou call for more?
Call, and with endless questions be distress'd,
All unresolvable, if earth is all. 605

“ Why life a moment, infinite desire?
“ Our wish eternity, our home the grave?
“ Heaven's promise dormant lies in human hope;
“ Who wishes life immortal proves it too.
“ Why happiness pursu'd, tho' never found? 610
“ Man's thirst of happiness declares it is,
“ (For Nature never gravitates to nought)
“ That thirst unquench'd declares it is not here.
“ My Lucia, thy Clarissa, call to thought;
“ Why cordial friendship rivetted so deep, 615
“ As hearts to pierce at first, at parting rend,
“ If friend and friendship vanish in an hour?
“ Is not this torment in the mask of joy?
“ Why by reflection marr'd the joys of sense?
“ Why past and future preying on our hearts, 620
“ And putting all our present joys to death?

" Why labours reason ? instinct were as well ;
 " Instinct far better ; what can chuse can err.
 " O how infallible the thoughtless brute !
 " 'Twere well his holiness were half as sure. 625

" Reason with inclination why at war ?
 " Why sense of guilt ? why conscience up in arms ?"
 Conscience of guilt is prophecy of pain,
 And bosom counsel to decline the blow.
 Reason with Inclination ne'er had jarr'd, 630
 If nothing future paid forbearance here.

Thus on—these, and a thousand pleas uncall'd,
 All promise, some ensure a second scene,
 Which, were it doubtful, would be dearer far
 Than all things else most certain ; were it false, 635
 What truth on earth so precious as the lie ?
 This world it gives us, let what will ensue ;
 This world it gives in that high cordial, hope ;
 The future of the present is the soul.

How this life groans when sever'd from the next ? 640
 Poor mutilated wretch that disbelieves !
 By dark distrust his being cut in two,
 In both parts perishes ; life void of joy,
 Sad prelude of eternity in pain !

Couldst thou persuade me the next life could fail 645
 Our ardent wishes, how should I pour out
 My bleeding heart in anguish, new as deep !
 Oh ! with what thoughts thy hope, and my despair,
 Abhorr'd Annihilation ! blasts the soul,
 And wide extends the bounds of human woe ! 650
 Could I believe Lorenzo's system true,
 In this black channel would my ravings run.

" Grief from the future borrow'd peace, ere while.
 " The future vanish'd ! and the present pain'd !
 " Strange import of unprecedented ill ! 655
 " Fall how profound ! like Lucifer's the fall !
 " Unequal fate ! his fall, without his guilt !
 " From where fond Hope built her pavilion high,
 " The gods among, hurl'd headlong, hurl'd at once
 " To night ! to nothing ! darker still than night. 660
 " If 'twas a dream, why wake me my worst foe,

- " Lorenzo! boastful of the name of friend!
 " O for delusion! O for error still!
 " Could vengeance strike much stronger than to plant
 " A thinking being in a world like this, 665
 " Not over-rich before, now beggar'd quite,
 " More curs'd than at the fall? the sun goes out!
 " The thorns shoot up! what thorns in ev'ry thought!
 " Why sense of better! it imbitters worse.
 " Why sense? why life! if but to sigh, then sink 670
 " To what I was! twice nothing! and much woe!
 " Woe from heaven's bounties! woe from what was
 " To flatter most, high intellectual powers. [wont
 " Thought, virtue, knowledge! blessings, by thy scheme
 " All poison'd into pains. First, knowledge, once
 " My soul's ambition, now her greatest dread. 676
 " To know myself true wisdom?—No, to shun
 " That shocking science, parent of Despair!
 " Avert thy mirror; if I see, I die.
 " Know my Creator? climb his blest abode 680
 " By painful speculation, pierce the veil,
 " Dive in his nature, read his attributes,
 " And gaze in admiration—on a foe,
 " Obtruding life, withholding happiness!
 " From the full rivers that surround his throne, 685
 " Not letting fall one drop of joy on man;
 " Man grasping for one drop, that he might cease
 " To curse his birth, nor envy reptiles more!
 " Ye sable clouds! ye darkest shades of night!
 " Hide him, for ever hide him, from my thought,
 " Once all my comfort, source and soul of joy! 690
 " Now leagu'd with furies, and with thee* against me.
 " Know his achievements? study his renown?
 " Contemplate this amazing universe,
 " Dropt from his hand, with miracles replete! 695
 " For what? 'mid miracles of nobler name
 " To find one miracle of misery?
 " To find the being which alone can know,
 " And praise his works a blemish on his praise! 699
 " Thro' Nature's ample range, in thought, to stroll,

* Lorenzo.

- " And start at man, the single mourner there, [death ?
 " Breathing high hope! chain'd down to pangs and
 " Knowing is suff'ring: and shall Virtue share
 " The sigh of Knowledge?—Virtue shares the sigh.
 " By straining up the steep of excellent, 705
 " By battles fought, and from temptation won,
 " What gains she but the pang of seeing Worth,
 " Angelic Worth, soon shuffled in the dark
 " With ev'ry vice, and swept to brutal dust?
 " Merit is madness, virtue is a crime; 710
 " A crime to reason, if it costs us pain
 " Unpaid: what pain, amidst a thousand more,
 " To think the most abandon'd, after days
 " Of triumph o'er their betters, find in death
 " As soft a pillow, nor make fouler clay! 715
 " Duty, religion,—these, our duty done,
 " Imply reward. Religion is mistake.
 " Duty!—there's none, but to repel the cheat.
 " Ye cheats! away: ye daughters of my pride,
 " Who feign yourselves the fav'rites of the skies;
 " Ye tow'ring Hopes! abortive Energies! 721
 " That toss and struggle in my lying breast,
 " To scale the skies, and build presumptions there,
 " As I were heir of an eternity.
 " Vain, vain ambitions! trouble me no more. 725
 " Why travel far in quest of sure defeat?
 " As bounded as my being be my wish.
 " All is inverted, wisdom is a fool.
 " Sense! take the reign; blind Passion! drive us on;
 " And, Ignorance! befriend us on our way; 730
 " Ye new, but truest patrons of our peace!
 " Yes; give the pulse full empire; live the brute,
 " Since as the brute we die: the sum of man,
 " Of godlike man! to revel and to rot.
 " But not on equal terms with other brutes; 735
 " Their revels a more poignant relish yield,
 " And safer too; they never poisons chuse.
 " Instinct than reason makes more wholesome meals,
 " And sends all-marring Murmur far away.
 " For sensual life they best philosophize, 74

- “ Theirs that serene the sages sought in vain :
“ ’Tis man alone expostulates with heav’n ;
“ His all the pow’r and all the cause to mourn.
“ Shall human eyes alone dissolve in tears ?
“ And bleed in anguish none but human hearts ! 745
“ The wide-stretch’d realm of intellectual woe,
“ Surpassing sensual far, is all our own.
“ In life so fatally distinguish’d, why
“ Cast in one lot, confounded, lump’d in death ?
“ Ere yet in being was mankind in guilt ? 750
“ Why thunder’d this peculiar clause against us,
“ All mortal and all wretched !—Have the skies
“ Reasons of state their subjects may not scan,
“ Nor humbly reason when they sorely sigh ?
“ All mortal and all-wretched !—’Tis too much, 755
“ Unparallel’d in nature : ’tis too much,
“ On being unrequested at thy hands,
“ Omnipotent ! for I see nought but pow’r.
“ And why see that ? why thought ! To toil and eat,
“ Then make our bed in darkness, needs no thought.
“ What superfluities are reas’ning souls ! 761
“ Oh give eternity, or thought destroy.
“ But without thought our curse were half unfelt :
“ Its blunted edge would spare the throbbing heart,
“ And therefore ’tis bestow’d. I thank thee, Reason !
“ For aiding life’s too small calamities, 766
“ And giving being to the dread of death.
“ Such are thy bounties !—Was it then too much
“ For me to trespass on the brutal rights ?
“ Too much for Heav’n to make one emmet more ?
“ Too much for Chaos to permit my mass 771
“ A longer stay with essences unwrought,
“ Unfashion’d, untormented into man ?
“ Wretched preferment to this round of pains !
“ Wretched capacity of frenzy, thought ! 775
“ Wretched capacity of dying, life !
“ Life, thought, worth, wisdom, all (O foul revolt !)
“ Once friends to peace, gone over to the foe.
“ Death then has chang’d his nature too. O Death !
“ Come to my bosom thou best gift of heaven ! 780

- " Best friend of man ! since man is man no more.
 " Why in this thorny wilderness so long,
 " Since there's no promis'd land's ambrosial bow'r
 " To pay me with its honey for my stings ?
 " If needful to the selfish schemes of heaven 785
 " To sting us sore, why mock'd our misery ?
 " Why this so sumptuous insult o'er our heads ?
 " Why this illustrious canopy display'd ?
 " Why so magnificently lodg'd Despair ?
 " At stated periods, sure-returning, roll 790
 " These glorious orbs, that mortals may compute
 " Their length of labours and of pains, nor lose
 " Their misery's full measure ?—Smiles with flowers
 " And fruits, promiscuous, ever teeming earth,
 " That man may languish in luxurious scenes, 795
 " And in an Eden mourn his wither'd joys ?
 " Claim earth and skies man's admiration, due
 " For such delights ! bless'd animals ! too wise
 " To wonder, and too happy to complain !
 " Our doom decreed demands a mournful scene :
 " Why not a dungeon dark for the condemn'd ? 801
 " Why not the dragon's subterranean den
 " For man to howl in ? why not his abode
 " Of the same dismal colour with his fate ?
 " A Thebes, a Babylon, at vast expence 805
 " Of time, toil, treasure, art, for owls and adders
 " As congruous as for man this lofty dome,
 " Which prompts proud thought, and kindles high de-
 " If, from her humble chamber in the dust, [fire,
 " While proud thought swells, and high desire inflames,
 " The poor worm calls us for her inmates there, 811
 " And round us death's inexorable hand
 " Draws the dark curtain close, undrawn no more.
 " Undrawn no more !—Behind the cloud of death,
 " Once, I beheld a sun, a sun which gilt 815
 " That sable cloud, and turn'd it all to gold.
 " How the grave's alter'd ! fathomless as hell !
 " A real hell to those who dreamt of heaven,
 " Annihilation ! how it yawns before me ?
 " Next moment I may drop from thought, from sense,

“ The privilege of angels and of worms,
 “ An outcast from existence! and this spirit,
 “ This all-pervading, this all-conscious soul,
 “ This particle of energy divine,
 “ Which travels nature, flies from star to star, 825
 “ And visits gods, and emulates their powers,
 “ For ever is extinguished! Horror! death!
 “ Death of that death I fearless once survey’d!—
 “ When horror universal shall descend,
 “ And heaven’s dark concave urn all human race,
 “ On that enormous unrefunding tomb, 831
 “ How just this verse, this monumental sigh!”
 ‘ Beneath the lumber of demolish’d worlds,
 ‘ Deep in the rubbish of the gen’ral wreck,
 ‘ Swept ignominious to the common mass 835
 ‘ Of matter, never dignified with life,
 ‘ Here lie proud rationals; the sons of heaven!
 ‘ The lords of earth! the property of worms!
 ‘ Beings of yesterday, and not to-morrow!
 ‘ Who liv’d in terror, and in pangs expir’d! 840
 ‘ All gone to rot in chaos, or to make
 ‘ Their happy transit into blocks or brutes,
 ‘ Nor longer sully their Creator’s name.’

Lorenzo! hear, pause, ponder, and pronounce,
 Just is this history? If such is man, 845
 Mankind’s historian, though divine, might weep.
 And dares Lorenzo smile!—I know thee proud;
 For once let pride befriend thee:—Pride looks pale
 At such a scene, and sighs for something more.
 Amid thy boasts, presumptions, and displays, 850
 And art thou then a shadow? less than shade?
 A nothing? less than nothing? To have been,
 And not to be, is lower than unborn.
 Art thou ambitious? why then make the worm
 Thine equal? Runs thy taste of pleasure high? 855
 Why patronize sure death of every joy?
 Charm riches! why chuse begg’ry in the grave,
 Of ev’ry hope a bankrupt! and for ever?
 Ambition, Pleasure, Avarice, persuade thee
 To make that world of glory, rapture, wealth, 860

They lately prov'd,* thy soul's supreme desire.
 What art thou made of? rather, how unmade?
 Great Nature's master appetite destroy'd,
 Is endless life and happiness despis'd;
 Or both wish'd here, where neither can be found:
 Such man's perverse eternal war with heaven 866
 Dar'st thou persist? and is there nought on earth
 But a long train of transitory forms,
 Rising and breaking millions in an hour?
 Bubbles of a fantastic deity, blown up 870
 In sport, and then in cruelty destroyed?
 Oh! for what crime, unmerciful Lorenzo!
 Destroys thy scheme the whole of human race?
 Kind is fell Lucifer compar'd to thee.
 Oh! spare this waste of being half divine, 875
 And vindicate th' economy of heaven.

Heaven is all love, all joy in giving joy;
 It never had created but to bless;
 And shall it then strike off the list of life
 A being bless'd, or worthy so to be? 880
 Heaven starts at an annihilating God.

Is that all nature starts at, thy desire?
 Art such a clod to wish thyself all clay?
 What is that dreadful wish?—The dying groan
 Of Nature, murder'd by the blackest guilt. 885
 What deadly poison has thy nature drank?
 To nature, undebauch'd, no shock so great.
 Nature's first wish is endless happiness;
 Annihilation is an after-thought,
 A monstrous wish, unborn till Virtue dies. 890
 And, oh! what depth of horror lies enclos'd!
 For non-existence no man ever wish'd,
 But first he wish'd the Deity destroy'd.

If so, what words are dark enough to draw
 Thy picture true? the darkest are too fair. 895
 Beneath what baleful planet, in what hour
 Of desperation, by what fury's aid,
 In what infernal posture of the foul,
 All hell invited, and all hell in joy

At such a birth, a birth so near of kin,
Did thy foul fancy whelp so black a scheme
Of hopes abortive, faculties half-blown,
And deities begun, reduc'd to dust ?

There's nought (thou say'st) but one eternal flux
Of feeble essences, tumultuous driven 905
Through time's rough billows into night's abyfs.

Say, in this rapid tide of human ruin,
Is there no rock on which man's tossing thought
Can rest from terror, dare his fate survey,
And boldly think it something to be born ? 910

Amid such hourly wrecks of being fair,
Is there no central, all-sustaining base,
All-realizing, all connecting power,
Which, as it call'd forth all things, can recal,
And force Destruction to refund her spoil ? 915

Command the grave restore her taken prey ?
Bid Death's dark vale its human harvest yield,
And earth and ocean pay their debt of man,
True to the grand deposit trusted there ?
Is there no potentate, whose outstretch'd arm, 920

When rip'ning Time calls forth th' appointed hour,
Pluck'd from foul Devastation's famish'd maw,
Binds present, past, and future, to his throne ?
His throne how glorious ! thus divinely grac'd
By germinating beings clust'ring round ! 925

A garland worthy the Divinity !
A throne by heaven's omnipotence in smiles,
Built (like a Pharos tow'ring in the waves)
Amidst immense effusions of his love !
An ocean of communicated bliss ! 930

An all-prolific, all preserving God !
This were a God indeed.— And such is man,
As here presumed ; he rises from his fall.
Think'st thou omnipotence a naked root,
Each blossom fair of Deity destroy'd ? 935

Nothing is dead ; nay, nothing sleeps ; each soul
That ever animated human clay,
Now wakes, is on the wing ; and where, O where,
Will the swarm settle ?—When the trumpet's call,

As sounding brass, collect's us, round heaven's throne
Conglob'd, we bask in everlasting day, 941
(Paternal splendour!) and adhere for ever.

Had not the soul this outlet to the skies,
In this vast vessel of the universe

How should we gasp, as in an empty void! 945
How in the pangs of famish'd hope expire!

How bright my prospect shines! how gloomy thine!
A trembling world! and a devouring God!
Earth but the shambles of Omnipotence!

Heaven's face all stain'd with causeless massacres 950
Of countless millions, born to feel the pang
Of being lost. Lorenzo! can it be?

This bids us shudder at the thoughts of life.

Who would be born to such a phantom world,
Where nought substantial but our misery? 955

Where joy (if joy) but heightens our distress.
So soon to perish, and revive no more?

The greater such a joy, the more it pains.

A world so far from great (and yet how great
It shines to thee!) there's nothing real in it; 960

Being a shadow; consciousness a dream;

A dream how dreadful! universal blank

Before it and behind! poor man a spark

From non-existence struck by wrath divine,

Glitt'ring a moment, nor that moment sure, 965

'Midst upper, nether, and surrounding night,

His sad, sure, sudden, and eternal tomb.

Lorenzo! dost thou feel these arguments?

Or is there nought but vengeance can be felt?

How hast thou dar'd the Deity dethrone? 970

How dar'd indict him of a world like this?

If such the world, creation was a crime;

For what is crime but cause of misery?

Retract, blasphemer! and unriddle this,

Of endless arguments, above, below, 975

Without us, and within, the short result—

If man's immortal, there's a God in heaven."

But wherefore such redundancy? such waste

Of argument? one sets my soul at rest;

One obvious, and at hand, and, oh!—at heart. 980

So just the skies, Philander's life so pain'd,
His heart so pure, that or succeeding scenes
Have palms to give, or ne'er had he been born.

“What an old tale is this,” Lorenzo cries.—

I grant this argument is old; but truth 985

No years impair; and had not this been true,
Thou never hadst despis'd it for its age.

Truth is immortal as thy soul, and fable
As fleeting as thy joys. Be wise, nor make
Heaven's highest blessing vengeance. O be wise! 990
Nor make a curse of immortality.

Say, knowst thou what it is, or what thou art?
Know'st thou th' importance of a soul immortal?
Behold this midnight glory: worlds on worlds!
Amazing pomp! redouble this amaze; 995
Ten thousand add; add twice ten thousand more;
Then weigh the whole; one soul out-weighs them all,
And calls th' astonishing magnificence
Of unintelligent creation poor.

For this believe not me; no man believe; 1000
Trust not in words, but deeds; and deeds no less
Than those of the Supreme; nor his a few:
Consult them all; consulted, all proclaim
Thy soul's importance. Tremble at thyself,
For whom Omnipotence has wak'd so long; 1005
Has wak'd and work'd for ages; from the birth
Of Nature to this unbelieving hour.

In this small province of his vast domain
(All nature bow while I pronounce his name!)
What has God done, and not for this sole end, 1010
To rescue souls from death? The soul's high price
Is writ in all the conduct of the skies.
The soul's high price is the creation's key,
Unlocks its mysteries, and naked lays
The genuine cause of ev'ry deed divine: 1015
That is the chain of ages which maintains
Their obvious correspondence, and unites
Most distant periods in one bless'd design:
That is the mighty hinge on which have turn'd

All revolutions, whether we regard 1020
 The nat'ral, civil, or religious world ;
 The former two but servants to the third :
 To that their duty done, they both expire,
 Their mass new cast, forgot their deeds renown'd,
 And angels ask "Where once they shone so fair?"

To lift us from this abject to sublime ; 1026
 This flux to permanent ; this dark to day ;
 This foul to pure ; this turbid to serene ;
 This mean to mighty !—For this glorious end
 Th' Almighty, rising, his long sabbath broke ! 1030
 The world was made ; was ruin'd ; was restor'd ;
 Laws from the skies were published ; were repeal'd ;
 On earth kings, kingdoms, rose ; kings, kingdoms, fell ;
 Fam'd sages lighted up the Pagan world ;
 Prophets from Sion darted a keen glance 1035
 Through distant age ; saints travell'd, martyrs bled ;
 By wonders sacred nature stood controll'd ;
 The living were translated ; dead were rais'd :
 Angels, and more than angels, came from heaven ;
 And, oh ! for this descended lower still ; 1040
 Guilt was hell's gloom ; astonish'd at his guest,
 For one short moment Lucifer ador'd.

Lorenzo ! and wilt thou do less ?—For this
 That hallow'd page, fools scoff at, was inspir'd,
 Of all these truths, thrice-venerable code ! 1045
 Deists ! perform your quarantine, and then
 Fall prostrate ere you touch it, lest you die.

Nor less intensely bent infernal powers
 To mar, than those of light this end to gain.
 O what a scene is here !—Lorenzo ! wake ! 1050
 Rise to the thought ; exert, expand thy soul
 To take the vast idea ; it denies
 All else the name of great. Two warring worlds,
 Not Europe against Afric ; warring worlds !
 Of more than mortal ! mounted on the wing ! 1055
 On ardent wings of energy and zeal,
 High hov'ring o'er this little brand of strife !
 This sublunary ball.—But strife for what ?
 In their own cause conflicting ? No ; in thine ;

In man's. His single int'rest blows the flame ; 1060
 His the sole stake ; his fate the trumpet sounds
 Which kindles war immortal. How it burns !

Tumultuous swarms of deities in arms !
 Force force opposing, till the waves run high,
 And tempest Nature's universal sphere. 1065

Such opposites eternal, stedfast, stern,
 Such foes implacable are good and ill : [them.

Yet man, vain man, would meditate peace between

Think not this fiction. " There was war in heaven."
 From heaven's high crystal mountain, where it hung,
 Th' Almighty's outstretch'd arm took down his bow, |
 And shot his indignation at the deep : 1072

Re-thunder'd hell, and darted all her fires.—

And seems the stake of little moment still ?

And slumbers man, who singly caus'd the storm ? 1075

He sleeps—And art thou shock'd at mysteries ?

The greatest thou. How dreadful to reflect

What ardour, care, and counsel, mortals cause

In breasts divine ! how little in their own !

Where'er I turn, how new proofs pour upon me !

How happily this wondrous view supports 1081

My former argument ! how strongly strikes

Immortal life's full demonstration here !

Why this exertion ? why this strange regard

From heaven's Omnipotent indulg'd to man ?— 1085

Because in man the glorious, dreadful pow'r,

Extremely to be pain'd, or blest'd for ever.

Duration gives importance, swells the price.

An angel, if a creature of a day,

What would he be ? a trifle of no weight ; 1090

Or stand or fall, no matter which, he's gone.

Because immortal, therefore is indulg'd

This strange regard of deities to dust.

Hence heaven looks down on earth with all her eyes ;

Hence the soul's mighty moment in her sight ; 1095

Hence ev'ry soul has partizans above,

And ev'ry thought a critic in the skies :

Hence clay, vile clay ! has angels for its guard,

And ev'ry guard a passion for his charge

Hence, from all age, the cabinet divine 1100
 Has held high counsel o'er the fate of man.

Nor have the clouds those gracious counsels hid;
 Angels undrew the curtain of the throne,
 And Providence came forth to meet mankind:
 In various modes of emphasis and awe 1105

He spoke his will, and trembling Nature heard;
 He spoke it loud, in thunder, and in storm:
 Witness thou, Sinai! whose cloud-cover'd height,
 And shaken basis, own'd the present God:
 Witness, ye billows! whose returning tide, 1110
 Breaking the chain that fasten'd it in air,
 Swept Egypt and her menaces to hell:

Witness, ye flames! th' Assyrian tyrant blew
 To sev'nfold rage, as impotent as strong:
 And thou, Earth! witness, whose expanding jaws
 Clos'd o'er Presumption's sacrilegious sons*; 1116
 Has not each element, in turn, subscrib'd
 The soul's high price, and sworn it to the wise?
 Has not flame, ocean, ether, earthquake, strove
 To strike this truth through adamant man? 1120
 If not all adamant, Lorenzo! hear;

All is delusion; Nature is wrapt up,
 In tenfold night, from Reason's keenest eye;
 There's no consistence, meaning, plan, or end,
 In all beneath the sun, in all above, 1125
 (As far as man can penetrate) or heaven,
 Is an immense, inestimable prize:

Or all is nothing, or that prize is all.—
 And shall each toy be still a match for heaven,
 And full equivalent for groans below? 1130

Who would not give a trifle to prevent
 What he would give a thousand worlds to cure?

Lorenzo! thou hast seen (if thine to see)
 All Nature and her God (by Nature's course,
 And Nature's course controll'd) declare for me. 1135
 The skies above proclaim "immortal man!"
 And "man immortal!" all below resounds.
 The world's a system of theology,

* Korah, &c.

Read by the greatest strangers to the schools ;
If honest, learn'd ; and sages o'er a plough.

1140

Is not, Lorenzo ! then, impos'd on thee

This hard alternative, or to renounce

Thy reason and thy sense, or to believe ?

What then is unbelief ? 'tis an exploit,

A strenuous enterprise ; to gain it man

1145

Must burst thro' ev'ry bar of common sense,

Of common shame, magnanimously wrong ;

And what rewards the sturdy combatant ?

His prize repentance ; infamy his crown.

But wherefore infamy ?—for want of faith

1150

Down the steep precipice of wrong he slides ;

There's nothing to support him in the right.

Faith in the future wanting is at least

In embryo, ev'ry weakness, ev'ry guilt,

And strong temptation ripens it to birth.

1155

If this life's gain invites him to the deed,

Why not his country sold, his father slain ?

'Tis virtue to pursue our good supreme ;

And his supreme, his only good, is here.

Ambition, av'rice, by the wise disdain'd,

1160

Is perfect wisdom, while mankind are fools,

And think a turf or tombstone covers all :

These find employment, and provide for sense

A richer pasture and a larger range ;

And sense, by right divine, ascends the throne, 1165

When Virtue's prize and prospect are no more ;

Virtue no more we think the will of Heav'n :

Would Heav'n quite beggar Virtue if belov'd ?

“ Has Virtue charms ? ”—I grant her heav'nly fair ;

But if unportion'd, all will Int'rest wed,

1170

Tho' that our admiration, this our choice.

The Virtues grow on immortality ;

That root destroy'd, they wither and expire.

A Deity believ'd will nought avail ;

Rewards and punishments make God ador'd, 1175

And hopes and fears give Conscience all her pow'r.

As in the dying parent dies the child,

Virtue with Immortality expires.

Who tells me he denies his soul immortal,
Whate'er his boast, has told me he's a knave. 1180

His duty 'tis to love himself alone,
Nor care tho' mankind perish if he smiles.
Who thinks ere long the man shall wholly die,
Is dead already; nought but brute survives.

And are there such?—Such candidates there are
For more than death; for utter loss of being, 1186
Being, the basis of the Deity!

Ask you the cause?—the cause they will not tell;
Nor need they. Oh the forceries of sense!
They work this transformation on the soul, 1190

Dismount her like the serpent at the fall,
Dismount her from her native wing (which soar'd
Erewhile ethereal heights) and throw her down
To lick the dust, and crawl in such a thought.

Is it in words to paint you? O ye Fall'n! 1195
Fall'n from the wings of Reason and of Hope!
Erect in stature, prone in appetite!

Patrons of pleasure, posting into pain!
Lovers of argument, averse to sense!
Boasters of liberty, fast-bound in chains! 1200

Lords of the wide creation, and the shame!
More senseless than th' irrationals you scorn!
More base than those you rule! than those you pity,
Far more undone! O ye most infamous
Of beings, from superior dignity! 1205

Deepest in woe from means of boundless bliss!

Ye curs'd by blessings infinite! because
Most highly favour'd, most profoundly lost!
Ye motley mass of contradiction strong!

And are you, too, convinc'd your souls fly off 1210
In exhalation soft, and die in air,

From the full flood of evidence against you?
In the coarse drudgeries and sinks of sense,
Your souls have quite worn out the make of heaven,
By vice new-cast, and creatures of your own; 1215

But tho' you can deform, you can't destroy:
To curse, not uncreate, is all your power.

Lorenzo! this black brotherhood renounce;

Renounce St. Evremond, and read St. Paul.
 Ere rapt by Miracle, by Reason wing'd, 1220
 His mounting mind made long abode in heaven.
 This is free-thinking, unconfin'd to parts,
 To send the soul, on curious travel bent,
 Through all the provinces of human thought ;
 To dart her flight thro' the whole sphere of man ; 1225
 Of this vast universe to make the tour ;
 In each recess of space and time at home,
 Familiar with their wonders ; diving deep ;
 And, like a prince of boundless int'rests there,
 Still most ambitious of the most remote ; 1230
 To look on truth unbroken and entire ;
 Truth in the system, the full orb ; where truths
 By truths enlighten'd and sustain'd, afford
 An arch-like, strong foundation, to support
 Th' incumbent weight of absolute, complete 1235
 Conviction : here, the more we press, we stand
 More firm : who most examine, most believe.
 Parts, like half-sentences, confound ; the whole
 Conveys the sense, and God is understood ;
 Who not in fragments writes to human race : 1240
 Read his whole volume, sceptic ! then reply.

This, this is thinking free, a thought that grasps
 Beyond a grain, and looks beyond an hour.
 Turn up thine eye, survey this midnight scene ;
 What are earth's kingdoms to yon boundless orbs,
 Of human souls, one day, the destin'd range ? 1246
 And what yon boundless orbs to godlike man ?
 Those num'rous worlds that throng the firmament,
 And ask more space in heaven, can roll at large
 In man's capacious thought, and still leave room 1250
 For ampler orbs, for new creations there.
 Can such a soul contract itself, to gripe
 A point of no dimension, of no weight ?
 It can ; it does : the world is such a point ;
 And of that point how small a part enslaves ! 1255

How small a part—of nothing, shall I say ?
 Why not ?—Friends, our chief treasure, how they drop !
 Lucia, Narcissa fair, Philander, gone !

The grave, like fabled Cerberus, has op'd
A triple mouth, and, in an awful voice, 1260
Loud calls my soul, and utters all I sing.
How the world falls to pieces round about us,
And leaves us in a ruin of our joy!

What says this transportation of my friends?
It bids me love the place where now they dwell, 1265
And scorn this wretched spot they leave so poor.
Eternity's vast ocean lies before thee;
There, there, Lorenzo! thy Clarissa fails.
Give thy mind sea room; keep it wide of earth,
That rock of souls immortal; cut thy cord; 1270
Weigh anchor; spread thy sails; call every wind;
Eye thy great pole-star; make the land of life.

Two kinds of life has double-natur'd man,
And two of death; the last far more severe.
Life animal is nurtur'd by the sun, 1275
Thrives on his bounties, triumphs in his beams:
Life rational subsists on higher food,
Triumphant in his beams who made the day.
When we leave that sun, and are left by this,
(The fate of all who die in stubborn guilt) 1280
'Tis utter darkness; strictly double death.
We sink by no judicial stroke of heaven,
But Nature's course, as sure as plummets fall.
Since God or man must alter ere they meet,
(Since light and darkness blend not in one sphere) 1285
'Tis manifest, Lorenzo! who must change.

If then that double death should prove thy lot,
Blame not the bowels of the Deity;
Man shall be bless'd as far as man permits.
Not man alone, all rationals heaven arms 1290
With an illustrious, but tremendous power,
To counteract its own most gracious ends,
And this of strict necessity, not choice;
That power deny'd, men, angels, were no more
But passive engines, void of praise or blame. 1295
A nature rational implies the pow'r
Of being bless'd or wretched as we please,
Else idle Reason would have nought to do,

And he that would be barr'd capacity
Of pain, courts incapacity of bliss. 1300
Heaven wills our happiness, allows our doom;
Invites us ardently, but not compels:
Heaven but persuades, almighty man decrees.
Man is the maker of immortal fates.
Man falls by man, if finally he falls; 1305
And fall he must, who learns from death alone
The dreadful secret that he lives for ever.

Why this to thee?—thee yet, perhaps, in doubt
Of second life? but wherefore doubtful still?
Eternal life is Nature's ardent wish: 1310
What ardently we wish we soon believe:
Thy tardy faith declares that wish destroy'd:
What has destroy'd it?—shall I tell thee what?
When fear'd the future, 'tis no longer wish'd:
And when unwish'd, we strive to disbelieve. 1315
“Thus infidelity our guilt betrays.”
Nor that the sole detection! Blush, Lorenzo!
Blush for hypocrisy, if not for guilt.
The future fear'd?—An infidel, and fear?
Fear what? a dream? a fable?—How thy dread, 1320
Unwilling evidence, and therefore strong,
Affords my cause an undesigned support!
How disbelief affirms what it denies!
“It, unawares, asserts immortal life.”—
Surprising! infidelity turns out 1325
A creed and a confession of our sins.
Apostates thus are orthodox divines.

Lorenzo! with Lorenzo clash no more,
Nor longer a transparent vizard wear.
Think'st thou Religion only has her mask? 1330
Our infidels are Satan's hypocrites,
Pretend the worst, and, at the bottom, fail.
When visited by thought (thought will intrude)
Like him they serve, they tremble, and believe.
Is there hypocrisy so foul as this? 1335
So fatal to the welfare of the world?
What detestation, what contempt, their due!
And, if unpaid, be thank'd for their escape

That Christian candour they strive hard to scorn.
 If not for that asylum, they might find.
 A hell on earth, nor 'scape a worse below.

1340

With insolence and impotence of thought,
 Instead of racking fancy to refute,
 Reform thy manners, and the truth enjoy.—
 But shall I dare confess the dire result?

1345

Can thy proud reason brook so black a brand?
 From purer manners, to sublimer faith,
 Is Nature's unavoidable ascent.

An honest Deist, where the Gospel shines,
 Matur'd to nobler, in the Christian ends.

1350

When that bless'd change arrives, e'en cast aside
 This song superfluous: life immortal strikes
 Conviction in a flood of light divine.

A Christian dwells like Uriel *, in the sun;
 Meridian evidence puts doubt to flight,
 And ardent hope anticipates the skies.

1355

Of that bright sun, Lorenzo! scale the sphere:
 'Tis easy; it invites thee; it descends
 From heav'n to woo and waft thee whence it came.

Read and revere the sacred page, a page

1360

Where triumphs immortality; a page
 Which not the whole creation could produce;
 Which not the conflagration shall destroy:

'Tis printed in the mind of gods for ever,
 In Nature's ruins not one letter lost.

1365

In proud disdain of what e'en gods adore,
 Dost smile?—Poor wretch! thy guardian angel weeps.

Angels and men assent to what I sing;

Wits smile, and thank me for my midnight dream.

How vicious hearts fume frenzy to the brain!

1370

Parts push us on to pride, and pride to shame:

Pert Infidelity is Wit's cockade,

To grace the brazen brow that braves the skies,

By loss of being dreadfully secure.

Lorenzo! if thy doctrine wins the day,

1375

And drives my dreams, defeated, from the field;

If this is all, if earth a final scene,

Take heed ; stand fast ; be sure to be a knave ;
A knave in grain ! ne'er deviate to the right.
Shouldst thou be good—how infinite thy loss ! 1380
Guilt only makes annihilation gain.
Bless'd scheme ! which life deprives of comfort, death
Of hope, and which vice only recommends.
If so, where, Infidels ! your bait thrown out
To catch weak converts ? where your lofty boast
Of zeal for virtue, and of love to man ? 1386
Annihilation ! I confess in these.

What can reclaim you ? dare I hope profound
Philosophers the converts of a song ?
Yet know its title * flatters you, not me ; 1390
Your's be the praise to make my title good ;
Mine to bless Heav'n, and triumph in your praise.
But since so pestilential your disease,
Tho' sov'reign is the med'cine I prescribe,
As yet I'll neither triumph nor despair, 1395
But hope, ere long, my midnight dream will wake
Your hearts, and teach your wisdom—to be wise :
For why should souls immortal, made for bliss,
E'er wish (and wish in vain !) that souls could die ?
What ne'er can die, oh ! grant to live, and crown
The wish, and aim, and labour, of the skies ; 1401
Increase, and enter on the joys of heav'n :
Thus shall my title pass a sacred seal,
Receive an imprimatur from above,
While angels shout—An Infidel Reclaim'd ! 1405

To close, Lorenzo ! Spite of all my pains,
Still seems it strange that thou shouldst live for ever ?
Is it less strange that thou shouldst live at all ?
This is a miracle, and that no more.
Who gave beginning can exclude an end. 1410
Deny thou art, then doubt if thou shalt be.
A miracle with miracles enclos'd
Is man ! and starts his faith at what is strange ?
What less than wonders from the wonderful ?
What less than miracles from God can flow ? 1415
Admit a God—that mystery supreme !

That cause uncaus'd ! all other wonders cease :
 Nothing is marvellous for him to do :
 Deny him—all is mystery besides ;
 Millions of mysteries ! each darker far 1420
 Than that thy wisdom would unwisely shun.
 If weak thy faith, why chuse the harder side ?
 We nothing know but what is marvellous ;
 Yet what is marvellous we can't believe,
 So weak our reason, and so great our God, 1425
 What most surprises in the sacred page,
 Or full as strange, or stranger, must be true.
 Faith is not Reason's labour, but repose.

To faith and virtue why so backward, man ?
 From hence :—the present strongly strikes us all,
 The future faintly : can we then be men ? 1431
 If men, Lorenzo ! the reverse is right.
 Reason is man's peculiar ; sense the brute's.
 The present is the scanty realm of Sense ;
 The future Reason's empire unconfined ; 1435
 On that expending all her godlike pow'r,
 She plans, provides, expatiates, triumphs there ;
 There builds her blessing ; there expects her praise ;
 And nothing asks of Fortune or of Man.
 And what is Reason ? be she thus defin'd ; 144
 Reason is upright stature in the soul.
 Oh ! be a man,—and strive to be a god.

“ For what ? (thou say'st) to damp the joys of life ?
 No ; to give heart and substance to thy joys.
 That tyrant, Hope, mark how she domineers ; 144
 She bids us quit realities for dreams,
 Safety and peace for hazard and alarm.
 That tyrant o'er the tyrants of the soul,
 She bids Ambition quit its taken prize,
 Spurn the luxuriant branch on which it sits, 145
 Tho' bearing crowns, to spring at distant game,
 And plunge in toils and dangers—for repose.
 If hope precarious, and of things, when gain'd,
 Of little moment, and as little stay,
 Can sweeten toils and dangers into joys, 145
 What then that hope which nothing can defeat,

Our leave unask'd ? rich hope of boundless blifs !
Blifs, past man's pow'r to paint it, time's to close !

This hope is earth's most estimable prize ;
This is man's portion, while no more than man : 1460
Hope, of all passions, most befriends us here ;
Passions, of prouder name, defend us less.

Joy has her tears, and Transport has her death :
Hope, like a cordial, innocent, tho' strong,
Man's heart, at once, inspirits and serenes. 1465

Nor makes him pay his wisdom for his joys :
'Tis all our present state can safely bear,
Health to the frame ! and vigour to the mind !
A joy attemper'd ! a chastis'd delight !

Like the fair summer ev'ning, mild, and sweet ! 1470
'Tis man's full cup, his paradise below !

A bless'd hereafter, then, or hop'd or gain'd,
Is all,—our whole of happiness : full proof
I chose no trivial or inglorious theme.

And know, ye foes to song ! (well-meaning men, 1475
Tho' quite forgotten * half your Bible's praise !)

Important truths, in spite of verse, may please :
Grave minds you praise, nor can you praise too much.

If there is weight in an eternity,
Let the grave listen,—and be graver still. 1480

THE COMPLAINT.

NIGHT VIII.

VIRTUE'S APOLOGY :

OR, THE

MAN OF THE WORLD ANSWERED.

In which are considered

*The Love of this Life ; the Ambition and Pleasure, with the Wit
and Wisdom, of the World.*

AND has all nature, then, espoused my part ?
Have I brib'd heaven and earth to plead against
And is thy soul immortal ?—What remains ? [thee ?
All, all, Lorenzo !—make immortal blest.
Unblest immortals ! what can shock us more ? 5

* The poetical parts of it.

And yet Lorenzo still affects the world ;
There stows his treasure ; thence his title draws,
Man of the world ! (for such wouldst thou be call'd)
And art thou proud of that inglorious style ?
Proud of reproach ? for a reproach it was, 10
In ancient days, and christian—in an age
When men were men, and not ashamed of heav'n—
Fir'd their ambition, as it crown'd their joy.
Sprinkled with dew from the Castalian font,
Fain would I re-baptize thee, and confer 15
A purer spirit, and a nobler name.

Thy fond attachments, fatal and inflam'd,
Point out my path, and dictate to my song.
To thee the world how fair, how strongly strikes
Ambition ! and gay Pleasures stronger still ! 20
Thy triple bane ! the triple bolt that lays
Thy virtue dead ! be these my triple theme ;
Nor shall thy wit or wisdom be forgot.

Common the theme, not so the song, if she
My song invokes, Urania ! deigns to smile. 25
The charm that chains us to the world, her foe,
If she dissolves, the man of earth, at once,
Starts from his trance, and sighs for other scenes :
Scenes where these sparks of night, these stars, shall shine
Unnumber'd suns (for all things, as they are, 30
The blest'd behold) and, in one glory, pour
Their blended blaze on man's astonish'd sight ;
A blaze—the least illustrious object there.

Lorenzo ! since eternal is at hand,
To swallow time's ambitions, as the vast 35
Leviathan the bubbles vain that ride
High on the foaming billow, what avail
High titles, high descent, attainments high,
If unattain'd our highest ? O Lorenzo !
What lofty thoughts, these elements above, 40
What tow'ring hopes, what sallies from the sun,
What grand surveys of destiny divine,
And pompous presage of unfathom'd fate,
Should roll in bosoms where a spirit burns,
Bound for eternity ! in bosoms read 45

By him, who foibles in archangels sees !
On human hearts he bends a jealous eye,
And marks, and in heav'n's register enrolls,
The rise and progress of each option there;
Sacred to doomsday ! that the page unfolds, 50
And spreads us to the gaze of gods and men.

And what an option, O Lorenzo ! thine ?
This world ! and this, unrivall'd by the skies ?
A world where lust of pleasure, grandeur, gold,
Three demons that divide its realms between them, 55
With strokes alternate buffet to and fro
Man's restless heart, their sport, their flying ball,
Till, with the giddy circle sick and tir'd,
It pants for peace, and drops into despair.

Such is the world Lorenzo sets above 60
That glorious promise angels were esteem'd
Too mean to bring ; a promise their Ador'd
Descended to communicate, and press,
By counsel, miracle, life, death, on man.
Such is the world Lorenzo's wisdom woos, 65
And on its thorny pillow seeks repose ;
A pillow which, like opiates ill-prepar'd,
Intoxicates, but not composes ; fills
The visionary mind with gay chimeras,
All the wild trash of sleep, without the rest : 70
What unfeign'd travel, and what dreams of joy !

How frail men, things ! how momentary both !
Fantastic chase of shadows hunting shades !
The gay, the busy, equal, tho' unlike ;
Equal in wisdom, differently wise ! 75
Thro' flow'ry meadows, and thro' dreary wastes,
One bustling, and one dancing, into death.
There's not a day but, to the man of thought,
Betrays some secret that throws new reproach
On life, and makes him sick of seeing more. 80
The scenes of bus'ness tell us—"What are men ;"
The scenes of pleasure—"What is all beside :"
There others we despise ; and here ourselves.
Amid disgust eternal dwells delight ?
'Tis approbation strikes the string of joy. 85

What wondrous prize has kindled this career,
 Stuns with the din, and chokes us with the dust,
 On life's gay stage, one inch above the grave?
 The proud run up and down in quest of eyes;
 The sensual in pursuit of something worse; 90
 The grave of gold: the politic of pow'r;
 And all of other butterflies as vain!
 As eddies draw things frivolous and light,
 How is man's heart by vanity drawn in!
 On the swift circle of returning toys 95
 Whirl'd, straw-like, round and round, and then ingulf'd,
 Where gay delusion darkens to despair!

"This is a beaten track."—Is this a track
 Should not be beaten? never beat enough,
 Till enough learn'd the truths it would inspire. 100
 Shall Truth be silent, because Folly frowns?
 Turn the world's history, what find we there
 But Fortune's sports, or Nature's cruel claims,
 Or woman's artifice, or man's revenge,
 And endless inhumanities on man? 105
 Fame's trumpet seldom sounds, but, like the knell,
 It brings bad tidings: how it hourly blows
 Man's misadventures round the list'ning world!
 Man is the tale of narrative old Time;
 Sad tale, which high as Paradise begins; 110
 As if, the toil of travel to delude,
 From stage to stage, in his eternal round,
 The Days, his daughters, as they spin our hours
 On Fortune's wheel, where, accident unthought,
 Oft in a moment snaps life's strongest thread, 115
 Each, in her turn, some tragic story tells,
 With now and then a wretched farce between,
 And fills his chronicle with human woes.

Time's daughters, true as those of men, deceive us;
 Not one but puts some cheat on all mankind, 120
 While in their father's bosom, not yet ours,
 They flatter our fond hopes, and promise much
 Of amiable, but hold him not o'erwise
 Who dares to trust them, and laughs round the year,
 At still confiding, still-confounded, man, 125

Confiding tho' confounded; hoping on,
Untaught by trial, unconvinc'd by proof,
And ever looking for the never-seen.

Life to the last, like harden'd felons, lies, 130
Nor owns itself a cheat till it expires :

Its little joys go out by one and one,
And leave poor man at length in perfect night,
Night darker than what now involves the pole.

O thou, who dost permit these ills to fall 135
For gracious ends, and wouldst that man should mourn!

O thou, whose hands this goodly fabric fram'd,
Who know'st it best, and wouldst that man should know!

What is this sublunary world? a vapour;

A vapour all it holds; itself a vapour;

From the damp bed of Chaos, by thy beam 140

Exhal'd, ordain'd to swim its destin'd hour

In ambient air, then melt and disappear,

Earth's days are number'd, nor remote her doom:

As mortal, tho' less transient, than her sons;

Yet they dote on her as the world and they 145

Were both eternal, solid; thou a dream.

They dote on what? immortal views apart,

A region of outsides! a land of shadows!

A fruitful field of flow'ry promises!

A wilderness of joys! perplex'd with doubts, 150

And sharp with thorns! a troubled ocean, spread

With bold adventurers, their all on board;

No second hope, if here their fortune frowns;

Frown soon it must. Of various rates they sail,

Of ensigns various; all alike in this, 155

All restless, anxious, toss'd with hopes and fears

In calmest skies; obnoxious all to storm,

And stormy the most gen'ral blast of life:

All bound for happiness; yet few provide

The chart of knowledge, pointing where it lies, 160

On Virtue's helm, to shape the course design'd:

All, more or less, capricious Fate lament,

Now lifted by the tide, and now resorb'd,

And farther from their wishes than before:

All, more or less, against each other dash, 165

To mutual hurt, by gusts of passion driv'n,
And suff'ring more from folly than from fate.

Ocean! thou dreadful and tumultuous home
Of dangers, at eternal war with man!

Death's capital, where most he domineers, 170

With all his chosen terrors frowning round,

(Tho' lately feasted high at Albion's cost*)

Wide-opening, and loud-roaring still for more!

Too faithful mirror! how dost thou reflect

The melancholy face of human life! 175

The strong resemblance tempts me farther still:

And, haply, Britain may be deeper struck

By moral truth, in such a mirror seen,

Which nature holds for ever at her eye.

Self-flatter'd, unexperienc'd, high in hope, 180

When young, with sanguine cheer, and streamers gay,

We cut our cable, launch into the world,

And fondly dream each wind and star our friend:

All in some darling enterprize embark'd;

But where is he can fathom its event! 185

Amid a multitude of artless hands,

Ruin's sure perquisite! her lawful prize!

Some steer aright, but the black blast blows hard,

And puffs them wide of hope: with hearts of proof,

Full against wind and tide, some win their way. 190

And when strong Effort has deserv'd the port,

And tugg'd it into view, 'tis won! 'tis lost!

Tho' strong their oar, still stronger is their fate:

They strike! and, while they triumph, they expire.

In strefs of weather most, some sink outright; 195

O'er them, and o'er their names, the billows close;

To-morrow knows not they were ever born.

Others a short memorial leave behind,

Like a flag floating, when the bark's ingulph'd;

It floats a moment, and is seen no more. 200

One Cæsar lives; a thousand are forgot;

How few, beneath auspicious planets born,

(Darlings of Providence! fond Fate's elect!)

With swelling sails make good the promis'd port,

With all their wishes freighted ! yet e'en these, 205
Freighted with all their wishes, soon complain ;
Free from misfortune, not from nature free,
They still are men ; and when is man secure ?
As fatal time as storm ! the rush of years
Beats down their strength ; their numberless escapes
In ruin end. And now their proud success 211
But plants new terrors on the victor's brow :
What pain to quit the world, just made their own,
Their nest so deeply drown'd, and built so high !
Too low they build who build beneath the stars. 215

Woe then apart (if woe apart can be
From mortal man) and Fortune at our nod,
The gay ! rich ! great ! triumphant ! and august !
What are they ?—The most happy (strange to say)
Convince me most of human misery. 220
What are they ? smiling wretches of to-morrow !
More wretched then than e'er their slave can be,
Their treach'rous blessings, at the day of need,
Like other faithless friends, unmask, and sting :
Then what provoking indigence in wealth ! 225
What aggravated impotence in pow'r !
High titles, then, what insult of their pain !
If that sole anchor, equal to the waves,
Immortal Hope ! defies not the rude storm,
Takes comfort from the foaming billow's rage, 230
And makes a welcome harbour of the tomb.

Is this a sketch of what thy soul admires ?
“ But here (thou say'st) the miseries of life
“ Are huddled in a group : a more distinct
“ Survey, perhaps, might bring thee better news.”
Look on life's stages ; they speak plainer still ; 235
The plainer they, the deeper wilt thou sigh.
Look on thy lovely boy ; in him behold
The best that can befall the best on earth ;
The boy has virtue by his mother's side : 240
Yes, on Florello look : a father's heart
Is tender, tho' the man's is made of stone :
The truth, thro' such a medium seen, may make
Impression deep, and fondness prove thy friend.

Florello! lately cast on this rude coast 245
 A helpless infant, now a heedless child.
 To poor Clarissa's throes thy care succeeds;
 Care full of love, and yet severe as hate!
 O'er thy soul's joy how oft thy fondness frowns!
 Needful austerities his will restrain, 250
 As thorns fence in the tender plant from harm.
 As yet his reason cannot go alone,
 But asks a sterner nurse to lead it on.
 His little heart is often terrify'd;
 The blush of morning, in his cheek, turns pale; 255
 Its pearly dew-drop trembles in his eye,
 His harmless eye! and drowns an angel there.
 Ah! what avails his innocence? the task
 Enjoin'd must discipline his early powers;
 He learns to sigh ere he is known to sin; 260
 Guiltless, and sad! a wretch before the fall!
 How cruel this! more cruel to forbear.
 Our nature such, with necessary pains
 We purchase prospects of precarious peace:
 Tho' not a father, this might steal a sigh. 265
 Suppose him disciplin'd aright (if not,
 'Twill sink our poor account to poorer still)
 Ripe from the tutor, proud of liberty,
 He leaps enclosure, bounds into the world;
 The world is taken, after ten years toil, 270
 Like ancient Troy, and all its joys his own.
 Alas! the world's a tutor more severe,
 Its lessons hard, and ill deserve his pains;
 Unteaching all his virtuous Nature taught,
 Or books (fair Virtue's advocates!) inspir'd. 275
 For who receives him into public life?
 Men of the world, the terræ-filial breed,
 Welcome the modest stranger to their sphere,
 (Which glitter'd long, at distance, in his sight)
 And in their hospitable arms enclose; 280
 Men who think nought so strong of the romance,
 So rank knight-errant, as a real friend;
 Men that act up to Reason's golden rule,
 All weakness of affection quite subdu'd;



YOUNG'S POEMS.
Care full of love, and yet severe as hate!
O'er thy soul's joy how oft thy fondness frowns!
Needfull austerities his will restrain.
Vide Vol. I. Night 8. Page 176. line 248.

Drawn by R. G. Bould. Engraved by C. Warren. for C. Cooke. April 13. 1799.

Men that would blush at being thought sincere, 258
And feign, for glory, the few faults they want;
That love a lie, where truth would pay as well,
As if to them Vice shone her own reward.

Lorenzo! canst thou bear a shocking sight?
Such, for Florello's sake, 'twill now appear. 290
See the steel'd files of season'd veterans,
Train'd to the world, in burnish'd falsehood bright;
Deep in the fatal stratagems of peace,
All soft sensation in the throng rubb'd off;
All their keen purpose in politeness sheath'd; 295
His friends eternal—during interest;
His foes implacable—when worth their while;
At war with ev'ry welfare but their own;
As wise as Lucifer, and half as good;
And by whom none, but Lucifer, can gain— 300
Naked thro' these, (so common Fate ordains)
Naked of heart, his cruel course he runs,
Stung out of all most amiable in life,
Prompt truth, and open thought, and smiles unfeign'd;
Affection, as his species wide-diffus'd, 305
Noble presumptions to mankind's renown,
Ingenuous trust, and confidence of love.

These claims to joy (if mortals joy might claim)
Will cost him many a sigh, till time and pains,
From the slow mistress of this school, Experience,
And her assistant, pausing, pale Distrust, 311
Purchase a dear-bought clue, to lead his youth
Thro' serpentine obliquities of life,
And the dark labyrinth of human hearts.
And happy! if the clue shall come so cheap; 315
For while we learn to fence with public guilt,
Full oft we feel its foul contagion too,
If less than heav'nly virtue is our guard.
Thus a strange kind of curs'd necessity
Brings down the sterling temper of his soul, 320
By base alloy, to bear the current stamp,
Below call'd wisdom; sinks him into safety,
And brands him into credit with the world,
Where spacious titles dignify disgrace,

And nature's injuries are arts of life ; 325
Where brighter reason prompts to bolder crimes,
And heavenly talents make infernal hearts,
That unfurmountable extreme of guilt !

Poor Machiavel ! who labour'd hard his plan,
Forgot that Genius need not go to school ; 330
Forgot that man, without a tutor wise,
His plan had practis'd long before 'twas writ.
The world's all title-page, there's no contents.
The world's all face. The man who shews his heart
Is hooted for his nudities, and scorn'd. 335

A man I knew who liv'd upon a smile,
And well it fed him ; he look'd plump and fair,
While rankest venom foam'd through ev'ry vein.
Lorenzo ! what I tell thee take not ill !
Living, he fawn'd on every fool alive ; 340
And, dying, curs'd the friend on whom he liv'd.
To such proficient thou art half a saint.

In foreign realms (for thou hast travell'd far)
How curious to contemplate two state-rooks,
Studious their nests to feather in a trice, 345
With all the necromantics of their art,
Playing the game of faces on each other,
Making court sweetmeats of their latent gall,
In foolish hope to steal each other's trust ;
Both cheating, both exulting, both deceived, 350
And sometimes both, (let earth rejoice) undone !
Their parts we doubt not, but be that their shame ;
Shall men of talents, fit to rule mankind,
Stoop to mean wiles that would disgrace a fool,
And lose the thanks of those few friend they serve ?
For who can thank the man he cannot see ? 356

Why so much cover ? it defeats itself.
Ye that know all things ! know ye not men's hearts
Are therefore known because they are conceal'd ?
For why conceal'd ?—the cause they need not tell.
I give him joy that's awkward at a lie ; 360
Whose feeble nature Truth keeps still in awe ;
His incapacity is his renown.
Tis great, 'tis manly to disdain disguise ;

It shews our spirit, or it proves our strength.
 Thou say'st 'tis needful: it is therefore right?
 Howe'er, I grant it some small sign of grace
 To strain at an excuse: and wouldst thou then
 Escape that cruel need? thou may'st with ease;
 Think no post needful that demands a knave.
 When late our civil helm was shifting hands,
 So Pulteney thought: think better if you can.

365

30

But this how rare! the public path of life
 Is dirty:—yet allow that dirt its due,
 It makes the noble mind more noble still.

375

The world's no neuter; it will wound or save;
 Our virtue quench, or indignation fire.

You say the world, well-known, will make a man.—
 The world, well known, will give our hearts to heav'n,
 Or make us demons, long before we die.

380

To shew how fair the world, thy mistress, shines,
 Take either part, sure ills attend the choice;
 Sure, tho' not equal, detriment ensues.

Not Virtue's self is deify'd on earth;

Virtue has her relapses, conflicts, foes;

385

Foes that ne'er fail to make her feel their hate.

Virtue has her peculiar set of pains.

True friends to virtue last, and least complain;

But if they sigh, can others hope to smile?

If Wisdom has her miseries to mourn,

390

How can poor Folly lead a happy life?

And if both suffer, what has earth to boast,

Where he most happy who the least laments?

Where much, much patience, the most envy'd state,

And some forgiveness, needs the best of friends!

For friend, or happy life, who looks not higher,

396

Of neither shall he find the shadow here.

The world's sworn advocate, without a fee,

Lorenzo smartly, with a smile, replies;

“ Thus far thy song is right, and all must own ”

400

“ Virtue has her peculiar set of pains:—

“ And joys peculiar who to Vice denies?

“ If vice it is with Nature to comply:

“ If pride and sense are so predominant,

"To check, not overcome them, makes a saint, 405

"Can Nature in a plainer voice proclaim

"Pleasure and glory the chief good of man?"

Can pride and sensuality rejoice?

From purity of thought all pleasure springs,

And from an humble spirit all our peace. 410

Ambition, Pleasure! let us talk of these;

Of these the Porch and Academy talk'd;

Of these each following age had much to say,

Yet unexhausted, still the needful theme.

Who talks of these, to mankind all at once 415

He talks; for where the saints from either free?

Are these thy refuge?—No; these rush upon thee,

Thy vitals seize, and, vulture-like, devour:

I'll try if I can pluck thee from thy rock,

Prometheus! from this barren ball of earth, 420

If reason can unchain thee, thou art free.

And, first, thy Caucasus, Ambition, calls;

Mountain of torments! eminence of woes!

Of courted woes! and courted thro' mistake!

'Tis not ambition charms thee, 'tis a cheat 425

Will make thee start, as H—— at his Moor.

Dost grasp at greatness, first know what it is.

Think'st thou thy greatness in distinction lies?

Not in the feather, wave it e'er so high,

By fortune stuck, to mark us from the throng, 430

Is glory lodg'd: 'tis lodg'd in the reverse;

In that which joins, in that which equals all,

The monarch and his slave,—“a deathless soul,

“Unbounded prospect, and immortal kin,

A father God, and brothers in the skies;” 435

Elder, indeed, in time, but less remote

In excellence, perhaps, than thought by man.

Why greater what can fall than what can rise?

If still delirious, now, Lorenzo! go,

And, with thy full-blown brothers of the world, 440

Throw scorn around thee; cast it on thy slaves,

Thy slaves and equals. How scorn cast on them

Robounds on thee! if man is mean, as man,

Art thou a god! if Fortune makes him so,

Beware the consequence : a maxim that
Which draws a monstrous picture of mankind,
Where in the drapery the man is lost ;
Externals flutt'ring, and the soul forgot.

Thy greatest glory, when disposed to boast,
Boasts that aloud in which thy servants share. 450

We wisely strip the steed we mean to buy.
Judge we, in their caparisons, of men ?
It nought avails thee where, but what, thou art.
All the distinctions of this little life
Are quite cutaneous, foreign to the man. 455

When thro' Death's streights Earth's subtle serpents
Which wriggle into wealth, or climb renown, [creep,
As crooked Satan the forbidden tree,
They leave their party-colour'd robe behind,
All that now glitters, while they rear aloft 460
Their brazen crests, and hiss at us below.

Of Fortune's fucus strip them, yet alive,
Strip them of body too ; nay, closer still,
Away with all but moral in their minds,
And let what then remains impose their name, 465
Pronounce them weak or worthy, great or mean.

How mean that snuff of glory Fortune lights,
And Death puts out ! Dost thou demand a test,
A test, at once, infallible and short,
Of real greatness ? that man greatly lives, 470

Whate'er his fate or fame, who greatly dies ;
High-flush'd with hope where heroes shall despair.
If this a true criterion, many courts
Illustrious, might afford but few grandees.

Th' Almighty, from his throne, on earth surveys
Nought greater than an honest, humble heart ; 476
An humble heart, his residence ! pronounc'd
His second seat, and rival to the skies.

The private path, the secret acts of men,
If noble, far the noblest of our lives ! 480

How far above Lorenzo's glory sits
Th' illustrious master of a name unknown ?
Whose worth unrivall'd and unwitness'd, loves
Life's sacred shades, where gods converse with men ;

And peace, beyond the world's conceptions, smiles!
As thou, (now dark) before we part, shalt see. 486

But thy great soul this skulking glory scorns:
Lorenzo's sick, but when Lorenzo's seen,
And, when he shrugs at public bus'ness lies.
Deny'd the public eye, the public voice, 490
As if he liv'd on others' breath, he dies.

Fain would he make the world his pedestal,
Mankind the gazers, the sole figure he.
Knows he that mankind praise against their will,
And mix as much detraction as they can? 495

Knows he that faithless Fame her whisper has,
As well as trumpet? that his vanity
Is so much tickled from not hearing all?
Knows this all-knower that from itch of praise,
Or from an itch more sordid, when he shines, 500

Taking his country by five hundred ears,
Senates at once admire him and despise,
With modest laughter lining loud applause,
Which makes the smile more mortal to his fame?
His fame which, (like the mighty Cæsar) crown'd
With laurels, in full senate greatly falls, 506
By seeming friends, that honour and destroy.
We rise in glory as we sink in pride.

Where boasting ends, there dignity begins;
And yet, mistaken beyond all mistake, 510
The blind Lorenzo's proud—of being proud,
And dreams himself ascending in his fall.

An eminence, tho' fancy'd, turns the brain;
All vice wants hellebore; but of all vice
Pride loudest calls, and for the largest bowl; 515
Because, unlike all other vice, it flies,
In fact, the point in fancy most pursu'd.
Who court applause oblige the world in this,
They gratify man's passion to refuse.

Superior honour, when assum'd, is lost: 520
Ev'n good men turn banditti, and rejoice,
Like Kouli-Kan, in plunder of the proud.

Tho' somewhat disconcerted, steady still
To the world's cause, with half a face of joy,

Lorenzo cries,—“ Be then Ambition cast ; 525
“ Ambition’s dearer far stands unimpeach’d,
“ Gay Pleasure! proud Ambition is her slave ;
“ For her he soars at great, and hazards ill ;
“ For her he fights, and bleeds, or overcomes, 529
“ And paves his way, with crowns, to reach her smile.
“ Who can resist her charms ?”—Or should ? Lorenzo !

What mortal shall resist where angels yield ?
Pleasure’s the mistress of ethereal pow’rs ;
For her contend the rival gods above !
Pleasure’s the mistress of the world below, 535
And well it is for man that Pleasure charms ;
How would all stagnate but for Pleasure’s ray !
How would the frozen stream of action cease !
What is the pulse of this so busy world ?

The love of pleasure : that, thro’ ev’ry vein, 540
Throws motion, warmth, and shuts out death from life.

Tho’ various are the tempers of mankind,
Pleasure’s gay family holds all in chains.
Some most affect the black, and some the fair ;
Some honest pleasure court, and some obscene. 545
Pleasures obscene are various, as the throng
Of passions that can err in human hearts,
Mistake their objects, or transgress their bounds.
Think you there’s but one whoredom ? whoredom all,
But when our reason licenses delight. 550

Dost doubt Lorenzo ? thou shalt doubt no more.
Thy father chides thy gallantries, yet hugs
An ugly, common, harlot in the dark,
A rank adulterer with others’ gold ;
And that hag, Vengeance, in a corner charms. 555

Hatred her brothel has, as well as Love,
Where horrid epicures debauch in blood.
Whate’er the motive, Pleasure is the mark :
For her the black assassin draws his sword ;
For her dark statelinen trim their midnight lamp, 560
To which no single sacrifice may fall ;
For her the faint abstains, the miser starves ;
The Stoic proud, for Pleasure, pleasure scorn’d ;
For her, Affliction’s daughters grief indulge,

And find, or hope, a luxury in tears ; 565
 For her guilt, shame, toil, danger, we defy,
 And, with an aim voluptuous, rush on death.
 Thus universal her despotic pow'r.

And as her empire wide, her praise is just.
 Patron of Pleasure ! Doter on delight ! 570
 I am thy rival ; pleasure I profess ;
 Pleasure the purpose of my gloomy song.
 Pleasure is nought ; but Virtue's gayer name ;
 I wrong her still, I rate her worth too low :
 Virtue the root, and pleasure is the flow'r , 575
 And honest Epicurus' foes were fools.

But this sounds harsh, and gives the wise offence,
 If o'erstrain'd wisdom still retains the name.
 How knits Austerity her cloudy brow,
 And blames, as bold and hazardous, the praise 580
 Of pleasure, to mankind, unprais'd, too dear !
 Ye modern Stoics ! hear my soft reply ;
 Their senses men will trust : we can't impose,
 Or, if we could, is imposition right ?
 Own honey sweet ; but, owning, add this sting, 585
 " When mix'd with poison it is deadly too."
 Truth never was indebted to a lie.

Is nought but virtue to be prais'd as good ?
 Why then is health preferr'd before disease ?
 What Nature loves is good, without our leave ; 590
 And where no future drawback cries, " Beware,"
 Pleasure, tho' not from virtue, should prevail :
 'Tis balm to life, and gratitude to Heav'n.
 How cold our thanks for bounties unenjoy'd !
 The love of Pleasure is man's eldest-born, 595
 Born in his cradle, living to his tomb.
 Wisdom, her younger sister, tho' more grave,
 Was meant to minister, and not to mar,
 Imperial Pleasure, queen of human hearts.

Lorenzo ! thou, her Majesty's renown'd, 600
 Tho' uncoift counsel, learned in the world !
 Who think'st thyself a Murray, with disdain
 May'st look on me : yet, my Demonsthenes !
 Canst thou plead Pleasure's cause as well as I ?

Know'st thou her nature, purpose, parentage? 605
 Attend my song, and thou shalt know them all;
 And know thyself; and know thyself to be
 (Strange truth!) the most abstemious man alive.
 Tell not Calista, she will laugh thee dead,
 Or send thee to her hermitage with L——. 610
 Absurd presumption! thou, who never knew'st
 A serious thought! shalt thou dare dream of joy?
 No man e'er found a happy life by chance,
 Or yawn'd it into being with a wish;
 Or with the snout of grov'ling Appetite 615
 E'er smelt it out, and grubb'd it from the dirt.
 An art it is, and must be learnt; and learnt
 With unremitting effort, or be lost,
 And leaves us perfect blockheads in our blifs.
 The clouds may drop down titles and estates; 620
 Wealth may seek us; but wisdom must be sought;
 Sought before all; but (how unlike all else
 We seek on earth!) 'tis never sought in vain. [see:
 First, Pleasure's birth, rise, strength, and grandeur,
 Brought forth by Wisdom, nurs'd by Discipline, 625
 By Patience taught, by Perseverance crown'd,
 She rears her head majestic; round her throne,
 Erected in the bosom of the just,
 Each virtue, list'd, forms her manly guard.
 For what are virtues? (formidable name!) 630
 What but the fountain or defence of joy?
 Why then commanded? need mankind commands,
 At once to merit and to make their blifs?
 Great Legislator! scarce so great as kind!
 If men are rational, and love delight, 635
 Thy gracious law but flatters human choice:
 In the transgression lies the penalty;
 And they the most indulge who most obey.
 Of Pleasure, next, the final cause explore:
 Its mighty purpose, its important end. 640
 Not to turn human brutal, but to build
 Divine on human, Pleasure came from heav'n:
 In aid to reason was the goddess sent,
 To call up all its strength by such a charm.

Pleasure first succours virtue ; in return, 645
Virtue gives Pleasure an eternal reign.

What but the pleasure of food, friendship, faith,
Supports life nat'ral, civil, and divine ?

'Tis from the pleasure of repast we live ;

'Tis from the pleasure of applause we please ; 650

'Tis from the pleasure of belief we pray :

(All pray'r would cease, if unbeliev'd the prize)

It serves ourselves, our species, and our God ;

And to serve more is past the sphere of man.

Glide then for ever Pleasure's sacred stream ! 655

Thro' Eden, as Euphrates ran, it runs,

And fosters ev'ry growth of happy life ;

Makes a new Eden where it flows,—but such

As must be lost, Lorenzo ! by thy fall.

“ What mean I by thy fall ? ”—Thou'lt shortly see,

While Pleasure's nature is at large display'd, 660

Already sung her origin and ends.

Those glorious ends by kind, or by degree,

When Pleasure violates, 'tis then a vice,

And vengeance too ; it hastens into pain. 665

From due refreshment life, health, reason, joy ;

From wild excess, pain, grief, distraction, death ;

Heav'n's justice this proclaims, and that her love.

What greater evil can I wish my foe,

Than his full draught of pleasure from a cask 670

Unbroach'd by just authority, ungaug'd

By temperance, by reason unrefin'd ?

A thousand demons lurk within the lee.

Heav'n, others, and ourselves ! uninjur'd these,

Drink deep ; the deeper then the more divine : 675

Angels are angels from indulgence there.

'Tis unrepenting pleasure makes a god.

Dost think thyself a god from other joys ?

A victim rather ! shortly sure to bleed. 679

The wrong must mourn : can Heav'n's appointments

Can man outwit Omnipotence ? strike out [fail ?

A self-wrought happiness unmeant by him

Who made us, and the world we would enjoy ?

Who forms an instrument, ordains from whence

Its dissonance or harmony shall rise. 685
Heav'n bade the soul this mortal frame inspire ;
Bade Virtue's ray divine inspire the soul
With unprecarioes flows of vital joy ;
And without breathing man as well might hope
For life, as, without piety, for peace. 690

“ Is virtue then and piety the same ? ” —

No ; piety is more ; 'tis virtue's source,
Mother of ev'ry worth, as that of joy.
Men of the world this doctrine ill digest ;
They smile at piety, yet boast aloud 695
Good-will to men, nor know they strive to part
What Nature joins, and thus confute themselves.
With piety begins all good on earth ;
'Tis the first-born of Rationality,
Conscience, her first law broken, wounded lies ; 700
Enfeebled, lifeless, impotent to good,
A feign'd affection bounds her utmost pow'r.
Some we can't love, but for th' Almighty's sake :
A foe to God was ne'er true friend to man.
Some sinister intent taints all he does, 705
And in his kindest actions he's unkind.

On piety humanity is built,
And on humanity much happiness ;
And yet still more on piety itself.
A soul in commerce with her God is heav'n, 710
Feels not the tumults and the shocks of life,
The whirls of passions, and the strokes of heart.
A Deity believ'd is joy begun ;
A Deity ador'd is joy advanc'd ;
A Deity belov'd is joy matur'd. 715
Each branch of piety delight inspires ;
Faith builds a bridge from this world to the next,
O'er death's dark gulf, and all its horror hides :
Praise, the sweet exhalation of our joy,
That joy exalts, and makes it sweeter still : 720
Pray'r ardent opens heav'n, lets down a stream
Of glory on the consecrated hour
Of man, in audience with the Deity.

Who worships the Great God, that instant joins
The first in heaven, and sets his foot on hell. 725

Lorenzo! when wast thou at church before?
Thou think'st the service long; but is it just?
Tho' just, unwelcome. Thou hadst rather tread
Unhallow'd ground: the Muse, to win thine ear,
Must take an air less solemn. She complies. 730

Good Conscience! at the sound the world retires:
Verse disaffects it, and Lorenzo smiles;
Yet has she her seraglio full of charms,
And such as age shall heighten, not impair.
Art thou dejected? is thy mind o'ercast? 735

Amid her fair ones thou the fairest chuse
To chase thy gloom.—“Go, fix some weighty truth;
“Chain down some passion; do some gen'rous good;
“Teach Ignorance to see, or Grief to smile;
“Correct thy friend; befriend thy greatest foe; 740
“Or with warm heart and confidence divine,
“Spring up, and lay strong hold on Him who made
Thy gloom is scatter'd, sprightly spirits flow, [thee.”
Tho' wither'd is thy vine, and harp unstrung.

Dost call the bowl, the viol, and the dance, 745
Loud mirth, mad laughter? Wretched comforters!
Physicians! more than half of thy disease,
Laughter, tho' never censur'd yet as sin,
(Pardon a thought that only seems severe)
Is half-immortal: is it much indulg'd? 750

By venting spleen, or dissipating thought,
It shews a scorner, or it makes a fool,
And sins, as hurting others, or ourselves.

'Tis pride, or emptiness, applies the straw
That tickles little minds to mirth effuse; 755

Of grief approaching the portentous sign!
The house of laughter makes a house of woe.

A man triumphant is a monstrous sight;

A man dejected is a sight as mean.

What cause of triumph where such ills abound? 760

What for dejection where presides a pow'r

Who call'd us into being to be bless'd?

So grieve, as conscious grief may rise to joy;

So joy, as conscious joy to grief may fall.

Most true a wise man never will be sad ; 765

But neither will sonorous, bubbling mirth,

A shallow stream of happiness betray ;

Too happy to be sportive, he's serene.

Yet would'st thou laugh, (but at thy own expence)

This counsel strange should I presume to give— 770

“ Retire, and read thy Bible, to be gay.”

There truths abound of sov'reign aid to peace :

Ah ! do not prize them less because inspir'd,

As thou and thine are apt and proud to do.

If not inspir'd, that pregnant page had stood, 775

Time's treasure ! and the wonder of the wise !

Thou think'st perhaps, thy soul alone at stake :

Alas !—should men mistake thee for a fool,—

What man of taste for genius, wisdom, truth,

Tho' tender of thy fame, could interpose ? 780

Believe me sense, here, acts a double part,

And the true critic is a christian too.

But these thou think'st are gloomy paths to joy.

True joy in sunshine ne'er was found at first.

They first themselves offend who greatly please, 785

And travel only gives us sound repose.

Heav'n sells all pleasure : effort is the price.

The joys of conquest are the joys of man ;

And Glory the victorious laurel spreads

O'er Pleasure's pure, perpetual, placid stream. 790

There is a time when toil must be preferr'd,

Or joy, by mis-tim'd fondness, is undone.

A man of pleasure is a man of pains.

Thou wilt not take the trouble to be blest'd.

False joys, indeed, are born from want of thought: 795

From thought's full bent and energy the true ;

And that demands a mind in equal poize,

Remote from gloomy grief and glaring joy.

Much joy not only speaks small happiness,

But happiness that shortly must expire. 800

Can joy, unbottom'd in reflection, stand ?

And, in a tempest, can Reflection live ?

Can joy, like thine, secure itself an hour ?

Can joy, like thine, meet accident unshock'd?
 Or ope the door to honest Poverty? 805
 Or talk with threat'ning Death, and not turn pale?
 In such a world, and such a nature, these
 Are needful fundamentals of delight:
 These fundamentals give delight indeed;
 Delight, pure, delicate, and durable; 810
 Delight unshaken, masculine, divine;
 A constant and a sound, but serious joy.

Is Joy the daughter of Severity?
 It is:—yet far my doctrine from severe.
 “Rejoice for ever:” it becomes a man: 815
 Exalts, and sets him nearer to the gods.
 “Rejoice for ever,” Nature cries; “Rejoice,”
 And drinks to man in her nectareous cup,
 Mix'd up of delicacies for ev'ry sense;
 To the great founder of the bounteous feast 820
 Drinks glory, gratitude, eternal praise;
 And he that will not pledge her is a churl.
 Ill firmly to support, good fully taste,
 Is the whole science of felicity:
 Yet sparing pledge; her bowl is not the best 825
 Mankind can boast—“A rational repast,
 “Exertion, vigilance, a mind in arms,
 “A military discipline of thought,
 “To foil temptation in the doubtful field,
 “And ever-waking ardour for the right.” 830
 'Tis these first give, then guard a cheerful heart.
 Nought that is right think little, well aware,
 What Reason bids, God bids; by his command
 How aggrandiz'd the smallest thing we do!
 Thus nothing is insipid to the wise; 835
 To thee insipid all but what is mad,
 Joys season'd high, and tasting strong of guilt.
 “Mad! (thou reply'st with indignation fir'd)
 “Of ancient sages proud to tread the steps,
 “I follow Nature.”—Follow Nature still, 840
 But look it be thine own. Is Conscience then
 No part of Nature? is she not supreme?

Thou regicide! O raise her from the dead!
Then follow Nature, and resemble God.

When, spite of conscience, pleasure is pursu'd, 845
Man's nature is unnaturally pleas'd;
And what's unnatural is painful too
At intervals, and must disgust e'en thee!
The fact thou know'st; but not perhaps the cause.
Virtue's foundations with the world's were laid: 850
Heav'n mix'd her with our make, and twisted close
Her sacred int'rests with the strings of life:
Who breaks her awful mandate shocks himself,
His better self: and is it greater pain
Our soul should murmur, or our dust repine? 855
And one, in their eternal war, must bleed.

If one must suffer, which should least be spar'd?
The pains of mind surpass the pains of sense:
Ask, then, the gout, what torment is in guilt.
The joys of sense to mental joys are mean: 860
Sense on the present only feed; the soul
On past and future forages for joy:
'Tis her's, by retrospect, thro' time to range,
And forward time's great sequel to survey.
Could human courts take vengeance on the mind 865
Axes might rust, and racks and gibbets fall.
Guard then thy mind, and leave the rest to fate.

Lorenzo! wilt thou never be a man?
The man is dead who for the body lives;
Lur'd by the beating of his pulse, to list 870
With ev'ry lust that wars against his peace,
And sets him quite at variance with himself.
Thyself first know, then love: a self there is,
Of virtue fond, that kindles at her charms:
A self there is as fond of ev'ry vice, 875
While ev'ry virtue wounds it to the heart;
Humility degrades it, Justice robs,
Bless'd Bounty beggars it, fair Truth betrays,
And godlike Magnanimity destroys.
This self, when rival to the former, scorn; 880
When not in competition, kindly treat,
Defend it, feed it:—But when Virtue bids,

Toss it or to the fowls or to the flames.
 And why? 'tis love of pleasure bids thee bleed:
 Comply, or own self-love extinct, or blind. 885

For what is vice? Self-love in a mistake:
 A poor blind merchant buying joys too dear.
 And virtue what? 'tis Self-love in her wits,
 Quite skilful in the market of delight.
 Self-love's good sense is love of that dread pow'r [890
 From whom herself, and all she can enjoy.
 Other self-love is but disguis'd self-hate,
 More mortal than the malice of our foes;
 A self-hate now scarce felt, then felt full fore,
 When being curs'd, extinction loud implor'd, 895
 And ev'ry thing prefer'd to what we are.

Yet this self-love Lorenzo makes his choice,
 And, in this choice triumphant, boasts of joy.
 How is his want of happiness betray'd
 By disaffection to the present hour! 900
 Imagination wanders far afield;
 The future pleases: why? the present pains.—
 "But that's a secret."—Yes, which all men know,
 And know from thee, discover'd unawares.
 Thy ceaseless agitation, restless roll 905
 From cheat to cheat, impatient of a pause,
 What is it?—'Tis the cradle of the soul,
 From instinct sent, to rock her in disease,
 Which her physician, Reason, will not cure.
 A poor expedient! yet thy best; and while 910
 It mitigates thy pain, it owns it too.

Such are Lorenzo's wretched remedies!
 The weak have remedies, the wise have joys.
 Superior wisdom is superior bliss,
 And what sure mark distinguishes the wise? 915
 Consistent wisdom ever wills the same;
 Thy fickle wish is ever on the wing.
 Sick of herself is Folly's character,
 As Wisdom's is a modest self-applause.
 A change of evils is thy good supreme, 920
 Nor but in motion canst thou find thy rest,
 Man's greatest strength is shewn in standing still.

The first true symptom of a mind in health
 Is rest of heart, and pleasure felt at home.
 False Pleasure from abroad her joys imports; 925
 Rich from within, and self-sustain'd, the true,
 The true is fix'd and solid as a rock;
 Slipp'ry the false, and tossing as the wave.
 This a wild wanderer on earth, like Cain;
 That like the fabled, self-enamour'd boy, 930
 Home-contemplation her supreme delight:
 She dreads an interruption from without,
 Smit with her own condition, and the more
 Intense she gazes, still it charms the more.

No man is happy till he thinks on earth 935
 There breathes not a more happy than himself:
 Then envy dies, and love o'erflows on all;
 And love o'erflowing makes an angel here,
 Such angels all entitled to repose
 On him who governs fate. Tho' tempest frowns, 940
 Tho' nature shakes, how soft to lean on heav'n!
 To lean on him on whom archangels lean!
 With inward eyes, and silent as the grave,
 They stand collecting ev'ry beam of thought,
 Till their hearts kindle with divine delight; 945
 For all their thoughts, like angels, seen of old
 In Israel's dream, come from, and go to heaven;
 Hence are they studious of sequester'd scenes,
 While noise and dissipation comfort thee.

Were all men happy, revellings would cease, 950
 That opiate for inquietude within,
 Lorenzo! never man was truly blest'd,
 But it compos'd and gave him such a cast,
 As Folly might mistake for want of joy:
 A cast unlike the triumph of the proud; 955
 A modest aspect and a smile at heart.
 O for a joy from thy Philander's spring!
 A spring perennial, rising in the breast,
 And permanent as pure! no turbid stream
 Of rapt'rous exultation, swelling high, 960
 Which, like land-floods, impetuous pour awhile,
 Then sink at once, and leave us in the mire.

What does the man who transient joy prefers?

What but prefer the bubbles to the stream?

Vain are all sudden fallies of delight, 965
Convulsions of a weak distemper'd joy.

Joy's a fix'd state; a tenure, not a start.

Bliss there is none but unprecarious bliss:

That is the gem; sell all, and purchase that.

Why go a-begging to contingencies, 970

Not gain'd with ease, nor safely lov'd, if gain'd?

At good fortuitous draw back, and pause;

Suspect it; what thou canst ensure, enjoy!

And nought but what thou giv'st thyself is sure.

Reason perpetuates joy that Reason gives, 975

And makes it as immortal as herself:

To mortals nought immortal but their worth.

Worth, conscious Worth! should absolutely reign,

And other joys ask leave for their approach,

Nor, unexamin'd, ever leave obtain. 980

Thou art all anarchy; a mob of joys

Wage war, and perish in intestine broils;

Not the least promise of internal peace!

No bosom-comfort! or unborrow'd bliss!

Thy thoughts are vagabonds; all outward-bound 985

'Mid sands, and rocks, and storms, to cruize for pleasure;

If gain'd, dear-bought; and better miss'd than gain'd.

Much pain must expiate what much pain procur'd.

Fancy and sense, from an infected shore,

Thy cargo bring, and pestilence the prize. 990

Then such thy thirst, (insatiable thirst

By fond indulgence but inflam'd the more)

Fancy still cruizes, when poor Sense is tir'd.

Imagination is the Paphian shop

Where feeble Happiness, like Vulcan, lame, 995

Bids foul ideas, in their dark recess,

And hot as hell, (which kindled the black fires)

With wanton art those fatal arrows form,

Which murder all thy time, health, wealth, and fame.

Wouldst thou receive them, other thoughts there are

On angel-wing, descending from above, 1000

Which these, with art divine, would counterwork,
And form celestial armour for thy peace.

In this is seen imagination's guilt ;
But who can count her follies ? she betrays thee, 1005
To think in grandeur there is something great.
For works of curious art, and ancient fame,
Thy genius hungers, elegantly pain'd,
And foreign climes must cater for thy taste.
Hence what disaster !—tho' the price was paid, 1010
That persecuting priest, the Turk of Rome,
Whose foot, (ye Gods !) tho' cloven, must be kiss'd,
Detain'd thy dinner on the Latian shore ;
(Such is the fate of honest Protestants !)
And poor Magnificence is starv'd to death. 1015
Hence just resentment, indignation, ire !—
Be pacify'd ; if outward things are great,
'Tis magnanimity great things to scorn ;
Pompous expences, and parades august,
And courts, that insalubrious soil to peace. 1020
True happiness ne'er enter'd at an eye ;
True happiness resides in things unseen.
No smiles of Fortune ever bless'd the bad,
Nor can her frowns rob innocence of joys ;
That jewel wanting, triple crowns are poor : 1025
So tell his Holiness, and be reveng'd.

Pleasure, we both agree, is man's chief good ;
Our only contest what deserves the name.
Give Pleasure's name to nought but what has pass'd
Th' authentic seal of Reason (which, like Yorke, 1030
Demurs on what it passes) and defies
The tooth of Time ; when past a pleasure still ;
Dearer on trial, lovelier for its age,
And doubly to be priz'd, as it promotes
Our future, while it forms our present joy. 1035
Some joys the future overcast, and some
Throw all their beams that way, and gild the tomb.
Some joys endear eternity, some give
Abhorr'd Annihilation dreadful charms.
Are rival joys contending for thy choice ? 1040
Consult thy own existence, and be safe ;

That oracle will put all doubt to flight.
Short is the lesson, tho' my lecture long ;
Be good—and let heaven answer for the rest.

Yet, with a sigh o'er all mankind, I grant, 1045

In this our day of proof, our land of hope,
The good man has his clouds that intervene ;
Clouds that obscure his sublunary day,

But never conquer : ev'n the best must own,

Patience and resignation are the pillars 1050

Of human peace on earth : the pillars these,

But those of Seth not more remote from thee,

Till this heroic lesson thou hast learn'd,

To frown at pleasure, and to smile in pain.

Fir'd at the prospect of unclouded bliss, 1055

Heaven in reversion, like the sun, as yet

Beneath th' horizon, cheers us in this world ;

It sheds, on souls susceptible of light,

The glorious dawn of our eternal day.

“ This (says Lorenzo) is a fair harangue ; 1060

“ But can harangues blow back strong Nature's stream,

“ Or stem the tide heaven pushes thro' our veins,

“ Which sweeps away man's impotent resolves,

“ And lays his labour level with the world ?” 1064

Themselves men make their comment on mankind,

And think nought is but what they find at home :

Thus weakness to chimera turns the truth.

Nothing romantic has the Muse prescrib'd ;

Above*, Lorenzo saw the man of earth,

The mortal man, and wretched was the sight. 1070

To balance that, to comfort and exalt,

Now see the man immortal ; him, I mean,

Who lives as such ; whose heart, full bent on heaven,

Leans all that way, his bias to the stars.

The world's dark shades, in contrast set, shall raise

His lustre more, tho' bright without a foil. 1076

Observe his awful portrait, and admire !

Nor stop at wonder ; imitate, and live.

Some angel guide my pencil, while I draw,

What nothing less than angel can exceed, 1080

* In a former Night.

A man on earth devoted to the skies ;
Like ships in seas, while in, above the world.

With aspect mild, and elevated eye,
Behold him seated on a mount serene,
Above the fogs of sense, and passion's storm : 1085
All the black cares and tumults of this life,
Like harmless thunders, breaking at his feet,
Excite his pity, not impair his peace.

Earth's genuine sons, the sceptred and the slave,
A mingled mob ! a wand'ring herd he sees, 1090
Bewilder'd in the vale ; in all unlike !
His full reverse in all ! what higher praise ?
What stronger demonstration of the right ?

The present all their care, the future his.
When public welfare calls, or private want, 1095
They give to Fame ; his bounty he conceals.
Their virtues varnish Nature, his exalt.
Mankind's esteem they court, and he his own.
Theirs the wild chase of false felicities ;
His the compos'd possession of the true. 1100
Alike throughout is his consistent peace,
All of one colour, and an even thread ;
While party-colour'd shreds of happiness,
With hideous gaps between, patch up for them
A madman's robe ; each puff of Fortune blows 1105
The tatters by, and shews their nakedness.

He sees with other eyes than theirs : where they
Behold a sun, he spies a Deity.
What makes them only smile makes him adore.
Where they see mountains, he but atoms sees. 1110
An empire, in his balance, weighs a grain.
They things terrestrial worship as divine ;
His hopes immortal, blow them by as dust
That dims his sight, and shortens his survey,
Which longs, in infinite, to lose all bound. 1115
Titles and honours (if they prove his fate)
He lays aside to find his dignity ;
No dignity they find in aught besides.
They triumph in externals, (which conceal
Man's real glory) proud of an eclipse ; 1120

Himself too much he prizes to be proud,
 And nothing thinks so great in man as man.
 Too dear he holds his int'rest to neglect
 Another's welfare, or his right invade ;
 Their int'rest, like a lion, lives on prey. 1125
 They kindle at the shadow of a wrong ;
 Wrong he sustains with temper, looks on heaven,
 Nor stoops to think his injurer his foe.
 Nought but what wounds his virtue wounds his peace.
 A cover'd heart their character defends ; 1130
 A cover'd heart denies him half his praise.
 With nakedness his innocence agrees,
 While their broad foliage testifies their fall.
 Their no-joys end where his full feast begins ;
 His joys create, theirs murder, future bliss. 1135
 To triumph in existence his alone ;
 And his alone triumphantly to think
 His true existence is not yet begun.
 His glorious course was yesterday complete ;
 Death then was welcome ; yet life still is sweet. 1140
 But nothing charms Lorenzo like the firm
 Undaunted breast.—And whose is that high praise !
 They yield to pleasure, tho' they danger brave,
 And shew no fortitude but in the field ;
 If there they shew it, 'tis for glory shewn, 1145
 Nor will that cordial always man their hearts.
 A cordial his sustains that cannot fail :
 By pleasure unsubdu'd, unbroke by pain,
 He shares in that Omnipotence he trusts ;
 All-bearing, all-attempting, till he falls, 1150
 And when he falls writes *Vici* on his shield.
 From magnanimity all fear above ;
 From nobler recompence above applause,
 Which owes to man's short outlook all its charms.
 Backward to credit what he never felt, 1155
 Lorenzo cries,—“ Where shines this miracle ?
 “ From what root rises this immortal man ?”
 A root that grows not in Lorenzo's ground :
 The root dissect, nor wonder at the flow'r.

He follows Nature, (not like thee*) and shews us
 An uninverted system of a man. 1161
 His appetite wears Reason's golden chain,
 And finds, in due restraint, its luxury.
 His passion, like an eagle well reclaim'd,
 Is taught to fly at nought but infinite. 1165
 Patient his hope, unanxious is his care,
 His caution fearless, and his grief (if grief
 The gods ordain) a stranger to despair.
 And why?—because affection, more than meet,
 His wisdom leaves not disengag'd from heaven. 1170
 Those secondary goods that smile on earth
 He, loving in proportion, loves in peace.
 They most the world enjoy who least admire.
 His understanding 'scapes the common cloud
 Of fumes arising from a boiling breast. 1175
 His head is clear, because his heart is cool,
 By worldly competitions uninflam'd.
 The mod'rate movements of his soul admit
 Distinct ideas, and matur'd debate,
 An eye impartial, and an even scale; 1180
 Whence judgment sound, and unrepenting choice.
 Thus, in a double sense, the good are wise;
 On its own dunghill wiser than the world.
 What, then, the world? it must be doubly weak.
 Strange truth! as soon would they believe their creed. 1185
 Yet thus it is, nor otherwise can be,
 So far from aught romantic what I sing.
 Bliss has no being, virtue has no strength,
 But from the prospect of immortal life.
 Who think earth all, or (what weighs just the same)
 Who care no further, must prize what it yields, 1190
 Fond of its fancies, proud of its parades.
 Who thinks earth nothing can't its charms admire;
 He can't a foe, tho' most malignant, hate,
 Because that hate would prove his greater foe. 1195
 'Tis hard for them (yet who so loudly boast
 Good-will to men?) to love their dearest friend;
 For may not he invade their good supreme,

* See Night the Eighth, ver. 838.

Where the least jealousy turns love to gall ?
 All shines to them, that for a season shines : 1200
 Each act, each thought, he questions ; "What its weight,
 "Its colour what, a thousand ages hence ?"—
 And what it there appears he deems it now ;
 Hence pure are the recesses of his soul.

The godlike man has nothing to conceal ; 1205
 His virtue constitutionally deep,
 Has Habit's firmness, and Affection's flame :
 Angels, ally'd, descend to feed the fire,
 And death, which others slays, makes him a god.

And now, Lorenzo ! bigot of this world ! 1210
 Wont to disdain poor bigots caught by heaven !
 Stand by thy scorn, and be reduc'd to nought !
 For what art thou !—Thou boaster ! while thy glare,
 Thy gaudy grandeur, and mere worldly worth,
 Like a broad mist, at distance, strikes us most, 1215
 And, like a mist, is nothing when at hand ;
 His merit, like a mountain, on approach,
 Swells more, and rises nearer to the skies,
 By promise now, and by possession, soon
 (Too soon, too much, it cannot be) his own. 1220

From this thy just annihilation rise,
 Lorenzo ! rise to something, by reply.
 The world, thy client, listens, and expects,
 And longs to crown thee with immortal praise.
 Canst thou be silent ? no ; for wit is thine, 1225
 And Wit talks most when least she has to say,
 And Reason interrupts not her career.
 She'll say—that mists above the mountains rise,
 And with a thousand pleasantries amuse ;
 She'll sparkle, puzzle, flutter, raise a dust, 1230
 And fly conviction in the dust she rais'd.

Wit, how delicious to man's dainty taste !
 'Tis precious as the vehicle of sense,
 But as its substitute a dire disease.
 Pernicious talent ! flatter'd by the world, 1235
 By the blind world, which thinks the talent rare.
 Wisdom is rare, Lorenzo ! wit abounds ;
 Passion can give it ; sometimes wine inspires

The lucky flash ; and madness rarely fails.
Whatever cause the spirit strongly stirs, 1240
Confers the bays, and rivals thy renown.
For thy renown 'twere well was this the worst ;
Chance often hits it ; and, to pique thee more,
See Dulness, blund'ring on vivacities,
Shakes her sage head at the calamity 1245
Which has expos'd, and let her down to thee.
But Wisdom, awful Wisdom ! which inspects,
Discerns, compares, weighs, separates, infers,
Seizes the right, and holds it to the last ;
How rare ! in senates, synods, sought in vain ; 1250
Or, if there found, 'tis sacred to the few ;
While a lewd prostitute to multitudes,
Frequent as fatal, Wit. In civil life
Wit makes an enterpriser, sense a man.
Wit hates authority, commotion loves, 1255
And thinks herself the lightning of the storm.
In states 'tis dangerous ; in religion death.
Shall Wit turn Christian when the dull believe ?
Sense is our helmet, wit is but the plume ;
The plume exposes, 'tis our helmet saves. 1260
Sense is the di'mond, weighty, solid, sound ;
When cut by wit it casts a brighter beam ;
Yet, Wit apart, it is a diamond still.
Wit, widow'd of good sense, is worse than nought ;
It hoists more sail to run against a rock. 1265
Thus a half-Chesterfield is quite a fool,
Whom dull fools scorn, and bless their want of wit.
How ruinous the rock I warn thee shun,
Where Syrens sit to sing thee to thy fate !
A joy in which our reason bears no part, 1270
Is but a sorrow, tickling ere it stings.
Let not the cooings of the world allure thee ;
Which of her lovers ever found her true ?
Happy ! of this bad world who little know :
And yet we much must know her to be safe. 1275
To know the world, not love her, is thy point :
She gives but little, nor that little long.
There is, I grant, a triumph of the pulse,

A dance of spirits, a mere froth of joy,
 Our thoughtless agitation's idle child, 1280
 That mantles high, that sparkles and expires,
 Leaving the soul more vapid than before ;
 An animal ovation ! such as holds
 No commerce with our reason, but subsists
 On juices, thro' the well-ton'd tubes well strain'd ;
 A nice machine ! scarce ever tun'd aright ; 1286
 And when it jars—thy syrens sing no more ;
 Thy dance is done ; the demi-god is thrown
 (Short apotheosis !) beneath the man,
 In coward gloom, immers'd, or fell despair. 1290

Art thou yet dull enough despair to dread,
 And startle at destruction ? if thou art,
 Accept a buckler, take it to the field ;
 (A field of battle is this mortal life !)
 When danger threatens, lay it on thy heart, 1295
 A single sentence proof against the world.
 " Soul, body, fortune ! ev'ry good pertains
 " To one of these ; but prize not all alike ;
 " The goods of fortune to thy body's health,
 " Body to soul, and soul submit to God." 1300
 Wouldst thou build lasting happiness, do this :
 Th' inverted pyramid can never stand.

Is this truth doubtful ? it outshines the sun ;
 Nay, the sun shines not but to shew us this,
 The single lesson of mankind on earth : 1305
 And yet—yet what ? No news ! mankind is mad ;
 Such mighty numbers list against the right,
 (And what can't numbers, when bewitch'd, achieve !)
 They talk themselves to something like belief
 That all earth's joys are theirs : as Athens' fool 1310
 Grinn'd from the port on ev'ry sail his own.

They grin, but wherefore ? and how long the laugh ?
 Half ignorance their mirth, and half a lie.
 To cheat the world, and cheat themselves, they smile :
 Hard either task ! the most abandon'd own 1315
 That others, if abandon'd, are undone :
 Then for themselves, the moment Reason wakes,
 (And Providence denies it long repose)

O how laborious is their gaiety!
They scarce can swallow their ebullient spleen, 1320
Scarce muster patience to support the farce,
And pump sad laughter till the curtain falls.
Scarce, did I say? some cannot fit it out;
Oft' their own daring hands the curtain draw,
And shew us what their joy by their despair. 1325

The clotted hair! gor'd breast! blaspheming eye!
Its impious fury still alive in death!
Shut, shut the shocking scene.—But heaven denies
A cover to such guilt, and so should man.
Look round, Lorenzo! see the reeking blade, 1330
Th' envenom'd phial, and the fatal ball;
The strangling cord, and suffocating stream;
The loathsome rottenness, and foul decays,
From raging riot (flower suicides!)
And pride in these more execrable still! 1335
How horrid all to thought—but horrors these
That vouch the truth and aid my feeble song.

From vice, sense, fancy, no man can be blest'd:
Bliss is too great to lodge within an hour:
When an immortal being aims at bliss, 1340
Duration is essential to the name.
O for a joy from reason! joy from that
Which makes man man, and, exercis'd aright,
Will make him more: a bounteous joy! that gives
And promises: that weaves, with art divine, 1345
The richest prospect into present peace:
A joy ambitious! joy in common held
With thrones ethereal, and their greater far:
A joy high-privileg'd from chance, time, death!
A joy which death shall double, judgment crown!
Crown'd higher, and still higher, at each stage, 1351
Thro' blest'd eternity's long day, yet still
Not more remote from sorrow than from him
Whose lavish hand, whose love stupendous, pours
So much of deity on guilty dust. 1355

There, O my Lucia! may I meet thee there,
Where not thy presence can improve my bliss!

Affects not this the sages of the world ?
 Can nought affect them, but what fools them too ?
 Eternity depending on an hour, 1360
 Makes serious thought man's wisdom, joy, and praise.
 Nor need you blush (tho' sometimes your designs
 May shun the light) at your designs on heav'n ;
 Sole point ! where overbashful is your blame. 1364

Are you not wise ?—you know you are ; yet hear
 One truth, amid your num'rous schemes mislaid,
 Or overlook'd, or thrown aside, if seen ;
 “ Our schemes to plan by this world or the next,
 “ Is the sole diff'rence between wise and fool.”

All worthy men will weigh you in this scale ; 1370
 What wonder, then, if they pronounce you light ?
 Is their esteem, alone not worth your care ?

Accept my simple scheme of common sense,
 Thus save your fame, and make two worlds your own.

The world replies not ; but the world persists, 1375
 And puts the cause off to the longest day,
 Planning evasions for the day of doom :
 So far, at that re-hearing, from redress,
 They then turn witnesses against themselves.

Hear that, Lorenzo ! nor be wise to-morrow. 1380
 Hasten, hasten ! a man, by nature, is in haste ;
 For who shall answer for another hour ?

'Tis highly prudent to make one sure friend,
 And that thou canst not do this side the skies.

Ye sons of earth ! (nor willing to be more !) 1385
 Since verse you think from priestcraft somewhat free,
 Thus, in an age so gay, the muse plain truths
 (Truths which, at church, you might have heard in
 Has ventur'd into light, well-pleas'd the verse [prose.]
 Should be forgot, if you the truths retain, 1390

And crown her with your welfare, not your praise.

But praise she need not fear : I see my fate,
 And headlong leap, like Curtius, down the gulph.

Since many an ample volume, mighty tome,
 Must die, and die unwept ; O thou minute, 1395
 Devoted page ! go forth among thy foes ;
 Go, nobly proud of martyrdom for truth,

And die a double death : mankind, incens'd,
 Denies thee long to live ; nor shalt thou rest
 When thou art dead, in Stygian shades arraign'd 1400
 By Lucifer, as traitor to his throne,
 And bold blasphemer of his friend,—the world ;
 The world, whose legions cost him slender pay,
 And volunteers around his banner swarm,
 Prudent as Prussia in her zeal for Gaul, 1405

“ Are all then fools ? ” Lorenzo cries — Yes, all
 But such as hold this doctrine, (new to thee)
 “ The mother of true wisdom is the will,”
 The noblest intellect a fool without it.
 World-wisdom much has done, and more may do,
 In arts and sciences, in wars and peace ; 1415
 But art and science, like thy wealth, will leave thee,
 And make thee twice a beggar at thy death.
 This is the most indulgence can afford,—
 “ Thy wisdom all can do, but—make thee wise.”
 Nor think this censure is severe on thee ;
 Satan thy master, I dare call a dunce. 1417

THE CONSOLATION.

NIGHT IX. AND LAST.

Containing, among other things,

- I. A MORAL SURVEY OF THE NOCTURNAL HEAVENS.
- II. A NIGHT ADDRESS TO THE DEITY.

Humbly inscribed to.

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE,

One of His Majesty's principal Secretaries of State.

----*Fatis contraria fata rependens.* Virg.

AS when a traveller, a long day past
 In painful search of what he cannot find,
 At night's approach, content with the next cot,
 There ruminates awhile his labour lost,
 Then cheers his heart with what his fate affords, 5
 And chants his sonnet to deceive the time,
 Till the due season calls him to repose :
 Thus I, long-travell'd in the ways of men,
 And dancing, with the rest, the giddy maze,
 Where Disappointment smiles at Hope's career, 10

Warn'd by the languor of life's ev'ning ray,
 At length have hous'd me in an humble shed,
 Where, future wand'ring banish'd from my thought,
 And waiting, patient, the sweet hour of rest,
 I chase the moments with a serious song. 15

Song soothes our pains, and age has pains to sooth.

When age, care, crime, and friends, embrac'd at heart,
 Torn from my bleeding breast, and death's dark shade,
 Which hovers o'er me, quench th' ethereal fire,
 Canst thou, O Night! indulge one labour more? 20
 One labour more indulge! then sleep, my strain!
 Till, haply, wak'd by Raphael's golden lyre,
 Where night, death, age, care, crime, and sorrow cease,
 To bear a part in everlasting lays;
 Tho' far, far higher set in aim, I trust, 25
 Symphonius to this humble prelude here.

Has not the muse asserted pleasures pure,
 Like those above, exploding other joys?
 Weigh what was urg'd, Lorenzo! fairly weigh,
 And tell me, hast thou cause to triumph still? 30
 I think thou wilt forbear a boast so bold:
 But if, beneath the favour of mistake,
 Thy smiles sincere, not more sincere can be
 Lorenzo's smile, than my compassion for him.
 The sick in body call for aid; the sick 35
 In mind are covetous of more disease,
 And when at worst, they dream themselves quite well.
 To know ourselves diseas'd is half our cure.
 When Nature's blush by custom is wip'd off,
 And conscience deaden'd by repeated strokes, 40
 Has into manners naturaliz'd our crimes,
 The curse of curses is our curse to love,
 To triumph in the blackness of our guilt,
 (As Indians glory in the deepest jet)
 And throw aside our senses with our peace. 45

But grant no guilt, no shame, no least alloy;
 Grant joy, and glory quite unfully'd shone;
 Yet still it ill deserves Lorenzo's heart,
 No joy, no glory, glitters in thy sight,
 But, thro' the thin partition of an hour, 50

I see its fables wove by destiny,
And that in sorrow bury'd, this in shame,
While howling furies ring the doleful knell,
And Conscience, now so lost thou scarce canst hear
Her whisper, echoes her eternal peal. 55

Where the prime actors of the last year's scene,
Their port so proud, their buskin, and their plume?
How many sleep, who kept the world awake
With lustre and with noise! Has death proclaim'd
A truce, and hung his fated lance on high? 60
'Tis brandish'd still, nor shall the present year
Be more tenacious of her human leaf,
Or spread, of feeble life, a thinner fall.

But needless monuments to wake the thought;
Life's gayest scenes speak man's mortality, 65
Tho' in a style more florid, full as plain
As mausoleums, pyramids, and tombs.
What are our noblest ornaments, but Death's
Turn'd flatterers of life in paint or marble,
The well-stain'd canvases, or the featur'd stone? 70
Our father's grace, or rather haunt, the scene.
Joy peoples her pavillion from the dead.

"Profess'd diversions! cannot these escape?"—
Far from it: these present us with a shroud,
And talk of death like garlands o'er a grave. 75
As some bold plunderers for bury'd wealth,
We ransack tombs for pastime; from the dust
Call up the sleeping hero; bid him tread
The scene for our amusement. How like gods
We sit, and, wrapt in immortality, 80
Shed gen'rous tears on wretches born to die,
Their fate deploring to forget our own!

What all the pomps and triumphs of our lives
But legacies in blossom? Our lean soil,
Luxuriant grown, and rank in vanities, 85
From friends interr'd beneath a rich manure!
Like other worms we banquet on the dead;
Like other worms, shall we crawl on, nor know
Our present frailties or approaching fate?

Lorenzo! such the glories of the world! 90
 What is the world itself? Thy world—a grave.
 Where is the dust that has not been alive?
 The spade, the plough, disturb our ancestors.
 From human mould we reap our daily bread.
 The globe around earth's hollow surface shakes, 95
 And is the cieling of her sleeping sons.
 O'er devastation we blind revels keep:
 Whole bury'd towns support the dancer's heel.
 The moist of human frame the sun exhales:
 Winds scatter thro' the mighty void the dry: 100
 Earth repossesses part of what she gave,
 And the freed spirit mounts on wings of fire:
 Each element partakes our scatter'd spoils;
 As nature wide our ruins spread. Man's death
 Inhabits all things but the thought of man. 105
 Nor man alone; his breathing bust expires;
 His tomb is mortal: empires die: where now
 The Roman? Greek? they stalk, an empty name!
 Yet few regard them in this useful light,
 Tho' half our learning is their epitaph. 110
 When down thy vale, unlock'd by midnight thought,
 That loves to wander in thy sunless realms,
 O Death! I stretch my view, what visions rise!
 What triumphs! toils imperial! arts divine!
 In wither'd laurels glide before my sight! 115
 What lengths of far-fam'd ages billow'd high
 With human agitation, roll along
 In unsubstantial images of air!
 The melancholy ghosts of dead Renown,
 Whisp'ring faint echoes of the world's applause, 120
 With penitential aspect, as they pass,
 All point at earth, and hiss at human pride,
 The wisdom of the wise, and prancings of the great.
 But, O Lorenzo! far the rest above,
 Of ghastly nature, and enormous size. 125
 One form assaults my sight, and chills my blood,
 And shakes my frame. Of one departed world
 I see the mighty shadow: oozy wreath
 And dismal sea-weed crown her: o'er her urn

Reclin'd, she weeps her desolated realms, 130
 And bloated sons, and, weeping, prophecies
 Another's dissolution, soon, in flames :
 But, like Cassandra, prophecies in vain ;
 In vain to many ; not I trust to thee.

For, know'st thou not, or art thou loath to know
 The great decree, the counsel of the skies ? 136
 Deluge and conflagration, dreadful pow'rs !
 Prime ministers of vengeance ? chain'd in caves
 Distinct, apart, the giant furies roar ;
 Apart, or such their horrid rage for ruin, 140
 In mutual conflict would they rise, and wage
 Eternal war, till one was quite devour'd.
 But not for this ordain'd their boundless rage.
 When heavens inferior instruments of wrath,
 War, famine, pestilence, are found too weak 145
 To scourge a world for her enormous crimes,
 These are let loose alternate : down they rush,
 Swift and tempestuous, from th' eternal throne,
 With irresistible commission arm'd,
 The world, in vain corrected, to destroy, 150
 And ease creation of the shocking scene.

Seest thou, Lorenzo ! what depends on man ?
 The fate of Nature, as for man her birth.
 Earth's actors change earth's transitory scenes,
 And make creation groan with human guilt. 155
 How must it groan, in a new deluge whelm'd.
 But not of waters ! At the destin'd hour,
 By the loud trumpet summon'd to the charge,
 See all the formidable sons of fire,
 Eruptions, earthquakes, comets, lightnings, play 160
 Their various engines ; all at once disgorge
 Their blazing magazines, and take, by storm,
 This poor terrestrial citadel of man.

Amazing period, when each mountain-height
 Outburns Vesuvius ; rocks eternal pour 165
 Their melted mass, as rivers once they pour'd ;
 Stars rush, and final Ruin fiercely drives
 Her ploughshare o'er creation !—while aloft,
 More than astonishment ! if more can be !

Far other firmament than e'er was seen, 170
 Than e'er was thought by man ! far other stars !
 Stars animate, that govern these of fire ;
 Far other sun !—a sun, O how unlike
 The babe at Bethle'm ! how unlike the man
 That groan'd on Calvary !—yet he it is ; 175
 That man of sorrows ! O how chang'd ! what pomp !
 In grandeur terrible all heaven descends !
 And gods ambitious triumph in his train.
 A swift archangel, with his golden wing,
 As blots and clouds that darken and disgrace 180
 The scene divine, sweeps stars and suns aside.
 And now, all dross remov'd, heaven's own pure day,
 Full on the confines of our ether flames.
 While (dreadful contrast) far, how far beneath !
 Hell, bursting, belches forth her blazing seas, 185
 And storms sulphureous, her voracious jaws
 Expanding wide, and roaring for her prey.
 Lorenzo ! welcome to this scene, the last
 In Nature's course, the first in Wisdom's thought.
 This strikes, if ought can strike thee ; this awakes
 The most supine ; this snatches man from death, 191
 Rouse, rouse, Lorenzo ! then, and follow me,
 Where truth, the most momentous man can hear,
 Loud calls my soul, and ardour wings her flight.
 I find my inspiration in my theme : 195
 The grandeur of my subject is my muse.

At midnight, when mankind is wrapp'd in peace,
 And worldly Fancy feeds on golden dreams,
 To give more dread to man's most dreadful hour ;
 At midnight, 'tis presum'd, this pomp will burst 200
 From tenfold darkness, sudden as the spark
 From smitten steel ; from nitrous grain the blaze.
 Man, starting from his couch, shall sleep no more !
 The day is broke which never more shall close !
 Above, around, beneath, amazement all ! 205
 Terror and glory join'd in their extremes !
 Our God in grandeur, and our world on fire !
 All nature struggling in the pangs of death !
 Dost thou not hear her ? dost thou not deplore

Her strong convulsions, and her final groan? 210

Where are we now? Ah me! the ground is gone
On which we stood. Lorenzo! while thou may'st
Provide more firm support, or sink for ever!

Where? how? from whence? Vain hope! it is too late!

Where, where, for shelter, shall the guilty fly, 215

When consternation turns the good man pale?

Great day! for which all other days were made;
For which earth rose from chaos, man from earth,
And an eternity, the date of gods,

Descended on poor earth-created man!

220

Great day of dread, decision, and despair!

At thought of thee each sublunary wish

Lets go its eager grasp, and drops the world,

And catches at each reed of hope in heaven.

At thought of thee!—and art thou absent then? 225

Lorenzo! no; 'tis here; it is begun:—

Already is begun the grand assize,

In thee, in all: deputed Conscience scales

The dread tribunal, and forestals our doom;

Forestals, and, by forestalling, proves it sure. 230

Why on himself should man void judgment pass?

Is idle Nature laughing at her sons?

Who Conscience sent her sentence will support,

And God above assert that god in man.

Thrice happy they! that enter now the court. 235

Heav'n opens in their bosoms: but how rare,

Ah me! that magnanimity, how rare!

What hero like the man who stands himself,

Who dares to meet his naked heart alone,

Who hears, intrepid, the full charge it brings, 240

Resolv'd to silence future murmurs there?

The coward flies, and, flying, is undone.

(Art thou a coward? no:) the coward flies;

Thinks, but thinks slightly; asks, but fears to know:

Asks "What is truth?" with Pilate, and retires; 245

Dissolves the court, and mingles with the throng:

Asylum sad! from reason, hope, and heav'n!

Shall all but man look out with ardent eye

For that great day which was ordain'd for man?

O day of consummation! mark supreme
(If men are wise) of human thought! nor least, 250
Or in the sight of angles or their King!

Angels, whose radiant circles, height o'er height,
Order o'er order, rising, blaze o'er blaze,
As in a theatre, surround this scene, 255
Intent on man, and anxious for his fate.

Angels look out for thee; for thee their Lord,
To vindicate his glory; and for thee
Creation universal calls aloud
To disinvolve the moral world, and give 260
To Nature's renovation brighter charms.

Shall man alone, whose fate, whose final fate,
Hangs on that hour, exclude it from his thought?
I think of nothing else; I see! I feel it!
All Nature, like an earthquake, trembling round! 265

All Deities, like summer's swarms, on wing!
All basking in the full meridian blaze!
I see the Judge enthron'd! the flaming guard!
The volume open'd! open'd ev'ry heart!

A sunbeam pointing out each secret thought! 270
No patron! intercessor none! now past
The sweet, the clement, mediatorial hour!
For guilt no plea! to pain no pause! no bound!
Inexorable all! and all extreme!

Nor man alone; the foe of God and man, 275
From his dark den, blaspheming, drags his chain,
And rears his brazen front, with thunder scarr'd,
Receives his sentence, and begins his hell.

All vengeance past, now, seems abundant grace.
Like meteors in a stormy sky, how roll 280
His baleful eyes! he curses whom he dreads,
And deems it the first moment of his fall.

'Tis present to my thought!—and yet where is it?
Angels can't tell me? angels cannot guess
The period, from created beings lock'd 285
In darkness? but the process and the place
Are less obscure; for these may man inquire.

Say, thou great close of human hopes and fears!
Great key of hearts! great finisher of fates! 289

Great end ! and great beginning ! say, where art thou ?
Art thou in time, or in eternity ?

Nor in eternity nor time I find thee :

These as two monarchs, on their borders meet,
(Monarchs of all elaps'd or unnarriv'd !)

As in debate, how best their pow'rs ally'd 295

May swell the grandeur, or discharge the wrath
Of him, whom both their monarchies obey.

Time, this fast fabric for him built (and doom'd
With him to fall) now bursting o'er his head,
His lamp, the sun, extinguish'd, from beneath 300

The frown of hideous darkness calls his sons
From their long slumber, from earth's heaving womb
To second birth ! contemporary throng !

Rous'd at one call ; upstart'd from one bed ;
Press'd in one crowd ; appall'd with one amaze ; 305

He turns them o'er, Eternity ! to thee :

Then (as a king depos'd disdains to live)

He falls on his own scythe, nor falls alone ;

His greatest foe falls with him : Time, and he

Who murder'd all Time's offspring, Death, expire.

Time was ! Eternity now reigns alone ! 311

Awful Eternity ! offended queen !

And her resentment to mankind how just !

With kind intent, soliciting access,

How often has she knock'd at human hearts ! 315

Rich to repay their hospitality,

How often call'd ! and with the voice of God !

Yet bore repulse, excluded as a cheat !

A dream ! while foulest foes found welcome there !

A dream ! a cheat ! now all things but her smile. 320

For, lo ! her twice ten thousand gates thrown wide,
And thrice from Indus to the frozen pole,

With banners streaming as the comet's blaze,

And clarions louder than the deep in storms,

Sonorous as immortal breath can blow, 325

Pour forth their myriads, potentates, and pow'rs,

Of light, of darkness, in a middle field,

Wide as creation ! populous as wide !

A neutral region ! there to mark th' event

Of that great drama, whose preceding scenes 330
 Detain'd them close spectators through a length
 Of ages, rip'ning to this grand result ;
 Ages as yet unnumber'd but by God,
 Who now, pronouncing sentence, vindicates
 The rights of virtue, and his own renown. 335

Eternity, the various sentence past,
 Assigns the sever'd throng distinct abodes,
 Sulphureous or ambrosial. What ensues ?
 The deed predominant ! the deed of deeds !
 Which makes a hell of hell, a heav'n of heav'n. 340
 The goddess, with determin'd aspect, turns
 Her adamantine key's enormous size
 Thro' Destiny's inextricable wards,
 Deep driving ev'ry bolt on both their fates ;
 Then from the crystal battlements of heaven 345
 Down, down she hurls it thro' the dark profound,
 Ten thousand thousand fathom, there to rust,
 And ne'er unlock her resolution more.
 The deep resounds, and hell, through all her glooms,
 Returns, in groans, the melancholy roar. 350

O how unlike the chorus of the skies !
 O how unlike those shouts of joy that shake
 The whole ethereal ! how the concave rings !
 Nor strange ! when deities their voice exalt ;
 And louder far than when creation rose, 355
 To see creation's godlike aim and end
 So well accomplish'd ! so divinely clos'd !
 To see the mighty Dramatist's last act
 (As meet) in glory rising o'er the rest.
 No fancy'd God ; a God, indeed, descends, 360
 To solve all knots ; to strike the moral home ;
 To throw full day on darkest scenes of time ;
 To clear, commend, exalt, and crown the whole.
 Hence, in one peal of loud eternal praise,
 The charm'd spectators thunder their applause, 365
 And the vast void beyond applause resounds.

What then am I ?—

Amidst applauding worlds,
 And worlds celestial, is there found on earth

A peevish, dissonant, rebellious string, 370
 Which jars in the grand chorus, and complains?
 Censure on thee, Lorenzo! I suspend,
 And turn it on myself; how greatly due!
 All, all is right, by God ordain'd or done;
 And who but God resum'd the friends he gave? 375
 And have I been complaining then so long?
 Complaining of his favours, pain, and death?
 Who without Pain's advice would e'er be good?
 Who without Death but would be good in vain?
 Pain is to save from pain; all punishment 380
 To make for peace; and death to save from death;
 And second death, to guard immortal life;
 To rouse the careless, the presumptuous awe,
 And turn the tide of souls another way;
 By the same tenderness divine ordain'd 385
 That planted Eden, and high-bloom'd for man
 A fairer Eden, endless, in the skies.

Heaven gives us friends to bless the present scene,
 Resumes them to prepare us for the next.
 All evils natural are moral goods; 390
 All discipline indulgence, on the whole,
 None are unhappy: all have cause to smile,
 But such as to themselves that cause deny.
 Our faults are at the bottom of our pains:
 Error in acts, or judgment is the source 395
 Of endless sighs, we sin, or we mistake,
 And Nature tax, when false opinion stings.
 Let impious grief be banish'd, joy indulg'd,
 But chiefly then when Grief puts in her claim.
 Joy from the joyous frequently betrays, 400
 Oft lives in vanity, and dies in woe.
 Joy amidst ills corroborates, exalts;
 'Tis joy and conquest; joy and virtue too.
 A noble fortitude in ills delights
 Heaven, earth, ourselves; 'tis duty, glory, peace. 405
 Affliction is the good man's shining scene;
 Prosperity conceals his brightest ray.
 As night to stars, woe lustre gives to man.
 Heroes in battle, pilots in the storm,

And virtue in calamities admire.

410

The crown of manhood is a winter-joy ;

An evergreen that stands the northern blast,

And blossoms in the rigour of our fate.

'Tis a prime part of happiness to know

How much unhappiness must prove our lot ;

415

A part which few possess ! I'll pay life's tax,

Without one rebel murmur, from this hour,

Nor think it misery to be a man ;

Who thinks it is shall never be a God.

Some ills we wish for when we wish to live.

420

What spoke proud passion?—"Wish my being lost?"

Presumptuous ! blasphemous ! absurd ! and false !

The triumph of my soul is—that I am :

And therefore that I may be—what ? Lorenzo !

Look inward, and look deep : and deeper still ;

425

Unfathomably deep our treasure runs,

In golden veins, thro' all eternity !

Ages, and ages, and succeeding still

New ages, where the phantom of an hour,

Which courts, each night, dull slumber for repair,

Shall wake, and wonder, and exult, and praise,

431

And fly thro' infinite, and all unlock,

And (if deserved) by heaven's redundant love,

Made half adorable, itself adore,

And find, in adoration, endless joy !

435

Where thou, not master of a moment here,

Frail as the flow'r, and fleeting as the gale,

May'st boast a whole eternity, enrich'd

With all a kind Omnipotence can pour.

Since Adam fell, no mortal, uninspir'd,

440

Has ever yet conceiv'd, or ever shall,

How kind is God, how great (if good) is man.

No man too largely from heaven's love can hope,

If what is hop'd he labours to secure.

[thee,

Ills !—there are none : all-gracious ! none from

From man full many ! Num'rous is the race

446

Of blackest ills, and those immortal too,

Begot by Madness on fair Liberty,

Heaven's daughter, hell debauch'd ! her hand alone
 Unlocks destruction to the sons of men, 450
 First barr'd by thine : high-wall'd with adamant,
 Guarded with terrors reaching to this world,
 And cover'd with the thunders of thy law,
 Whose threats are mercies, whose injunction guides,
 Assisting, not restraining, Reason's choice ; 455
 Whose sanctions, unavoidable results
 From Nature's course, indulgently reveal'd,
 If unreveal'd more dang'rous, nor less sure.
 Thus an indulgent father warns his sons,
 " Do this ; fly that ; "—nor always tells the cause ; 460
 Pleas'd to reward, as duty to his will,
 A conduct needful to their own repose.

Great God of wonders ! (if, thy love survey'd,
 Aught else the name of wonderful retains)
 What rocks are these on which to build our trust ? 465
 Thy ways admit no blemish ; none I find ;
 Or this alone,—“ That none is to be found : ”
 Not one to soften Censure's hardy crime ;
 Not one to palliate peevish Grief's complaint,
 Who, like a demon, murm'ring from the dust, 470
 Dares into judgment call her judge.—Supreme !
 For all I bless thee ; most for the severe ;
 Her death *—my own at hand—the fiery gulf,
 That flaming bound of wrath omnipotent !
 It thunders ;—but it thunders to preserve ; 475
 It strengthens what it strikes ; its wholesome dread
 Averts the dreaded pain ; its hideous groans
 Join heaven's sweet hallelujahs in thy praise,
 Great source of good alone ! how kind in all !
 In vengeance kind ! Pain, death, gehenna, save. 480

Thus, in thy world material, mighty Mind !
 Not that alone which solaces and shines,
 The rough and gloomy, challenges our praise.
 The winter is as needful as the spring ;
 The thunder as the sun. A stagnate mass 485
 Of vapours breeds a pestilential air :
 Nor more propitious the Favonian breeze

To Nature's health, than purifying storms,
 The dread volcano ministers to good ;
 Its smother'd flames might undermine the world. 490
 Loud Ætnas fulminate in love to man :
 Comets good omens are when duly scann'd ;
 And, in their use, eclipses learn to shine.

Man is responsible for ills receiv'd ;
 Those we call wretched are a chosen band, 495
 Compell'd to refuge in the right, for peace.

Amid my list of blessings infinite
 Stand this the foremost, " That my heart has bled."'
 'Tis heaven's last effort of good-will to man.

When pain can't bless, heav'n quits us in despair. 500

Who fails to grieve, when just occasion calls,
 Or grieves too much, deserves not to be bless'd,
 Inhuman or effeminate, his heart.

Reason absolves the grief which reason ends.

May Heav'n ne'er trust my friend with happiness, 505

Till it has taught him how to bear it well

By previous pain, and made it safe to smile !

Such smiles are mine, and such may they remain,
 Nor hazard their extinction from excess.

My change of heart a change of style demands ; 510

The Consolation cancels the Complaint,

And makes a convert of my guilty song.

As when o'er-labour'd, and inclin'd to breathe,

A panting traveller some rising ground,

Some small ascent, has gain'd, he turns him round, 515

And measures with his eye the various vales,

The fields, woods, meads, and rivers, he has past,

And, satiate of his journey, thinks of home.

Endear'd by distance, nor affects more toil ;

Thus I, tho' small, indeed, is that ascent 520

The Muse has gain'd, review the paths she trod,

Various, extensive, beaten but by few ;

And, conscious of her prudence in repose,

Pause, and with pleasure meditate an end,

Tho' still remote ; so fruitful is my theme. 525

Thro' many a field of moral and divine

The Muse has stray'd, and much of sorrow seen



A starry crown thy raven brow adorns,
 An azure zone thy waist; clouds in heavens loom
 Wrought through varieties of shape and shade,
 In ample folds of drapery divine,
 Thy flowing mantle form, and heaven throughout
 Voluminously pour thy pompous train.

Vide Young Vol. I. Night 9. Page 29. line 556.

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In human ways, and human passions,
Which none who read this book can miss;
O'er friends and foes, and all the world,
Of love divine the wisdom that is given,
Pro'd immortality, and all the rest,
The grand immortal truth, the great
Of human grief, the power of love,
The moral life, the sacred law,
That not in time, nor with a change,
Of most our virtues, and our sins,
In this our land of mortal men,
For peace on earth, and good will,
What first remains, what last remains,
To be brought forth, and all the rest,
From this our land, the power of love,
While others sleep, the power of love,
In shadows wait, and all the rest,
Her shepherd's staff, and all the rest,
Then I of thee, the power of love,
Beneath which lies, and all the rest,
Immortal life, and all the rest,
Where end, or how, and all the rest,
To seek their path.

Nature's great mother, the power of love,
And fate to love, the power of love,
By mortals and immortals, the power of love,
A heavy crown, the power of love,
An eagle's nest, the power of love,
Wrought thus, the power of love,
In ample halls, the power of love,
Thy flowing mantle, the power of love,
Voluminous, the power of love,
Thy glowing garments, the power of love,
Inspiring aspect, the power of love,
And, like a king, the power of love,
Drawn out, the power of love,
And what, the power of love,
What more, the power of love,
Creation of, the power of love,

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In human ways, and much of false and vain,
 Which none who travel this bad road can miss.
 O'er friends deceas'd full heartily she wept ; 530
 Of love divine the wonders she display'd ;
 Prov'd man immortal ; shew'd the source of joy ;
 The grand tribunal rais'd ; assign'd the bounds
 Of human grief. In few, to close the whole,
 The moral Muse has shadow'd out a sketch, 535
 Tho' not in form, nor with a Raphael stroke,
 Of most our weakness needs believe or do,
 In this our land of travail and of hope,
 For peace on earth, or prospect of the skies. 539

What then remains ? much ! much ! a mighty debt
 To be discharg'd. These thoughts, O Night ! are thine ;
 From thee they came, like lovers' secret sighs,
 While others slept. So Cynthia, (poets feign)
 In shadows veil'd, soft sliding from her sphere,
 Her shepherd cheer'd, of her enamour'd less 545
 Than I of thee.—And art thou still unsung,
 Beneath whose brow, and by whose aid, I sing ?
 Immortal Silence ! where shall I begin ?
 Where end ? or how steal music from the spheres
 To sooth their goddesses ? 550

O majestic Night !

Nature's great ancestor ! Day's elder-born !
 And fated to survive the transient sun !
 By mortals and immortals seen with awe !
 A starry crown thy raven brow adorns, 555
 An azure zone thy waist ; clouds, in heaven's loom
 Wrought thro' varieties of shape and shade,
 In ample folds of drapery divine,
 Thy flowing mantle form, and, heav'n throughout,
 Voluminously pour thy pompous train : 560
 Thy gloomy grandeurs (Nature's most august,
 Inspiring aspect !) claim a grateful verse,
 And, like a sable curtain, starr'd with gold,
 Drawn o'er my labours past, shall close the scene.

And what, O Man ! so worthy to be sung ? 565
 What more prepares us for the songs of heav'n ?
 Creation of archangels is the theme !

What to be sung so needful, what so well
Celestial joys prepare us to sustain?

The soul of man, his face design'd to see 570

Who gave these wonders to be seen by man,

Has here a previous scene of objects great

On which to dwell, to stretch to that expanse

Of thought, to rise to that exalted height

Of admiration, to contract that awe, 575

And give her whole capacities that strength

Which best may qualify for final joy.

The more our spirits are enlarg'd on earth,

The deeper draught shall they receive of heav'n. 579

Heaven's King! whose face unveil'd consummates

Redundant bliss! which fills that mighty void [bliss,

The whole creation leaves in human hearts!

Thou! who didst touch the lip of Jesse's son,

Rapt in sweet contemplation of these fires,

And set his harp in concert with the spheres, 585

While of thy works material the Supreme

I dare attempt, assist my daring song:

Loose me from earth's enclosure; from the sun's

Contracted circle set my heart at large;

Eliminate my spirit, give it range 590

Thro' provinces of thought yet unexplor'd;

Teach me, by this stupendous scaffolding,

Creation's golden steps, to climb to thee:

Teach me with art great nature to control,

And spread a lustre o'er the shades of night. 595

Feel I thy kind assent? and shall the sun

Be seen at midnight rising in my song?

Lorenzo! come, and warm thee; thou whose heart,

Whose little heart, is moor'd within a nook

Of this obscure terrestrial, anchor weigh; 600

Another ocean calls, a nobler port;

I am thy pilot, I thy prosp'rous gale:

Gainful thy voyage thro' yon azure main,

Main without tempest, pirate, rock, or shore,

And whence thou may'st import eternal wealth, 605

And leave to beggar'd minds the pearl and gold.

Thy travels dost thou boast o'er foreign realms?

Thou stranger to the world! thy tour begin;
 Thy tour thro' Nature's universal orb.
 Nature delineates her whole chart at large 610
 On soaring souls, that sail among the spheres;
 And man how purblind, if unknown the whole!
 Who circles spacious earth, then travels here,
 Shall own he never was from home before!
 Come, my Prometheus *! from thy pointed rock 615
 Of false ambition, if unchain'd, we'll mount;
 We'll innocently steal celestial fire,
 And kindle our devotion at the stars,
 A theft that shall not chain, but set thee free,
 Above our atmosphere's intestine wars, 620
 Rain's fountain-head, the magazine of hail;
 Above the northen nests of feather'd snows,
 The brew of thunders, and the flaming forge
 That forms the crooked lightning; 'bove the caves
 Where infant tempests wait their growing wings, 625
 And tune their tender voices to that roar,
 Which soon perhaps shall shake a guilty world;
 Above misconstru'd omens of the sky,
 Far-travell'd comets' calculated blaze,
 Elance thy thought, and think of more than man:
 Thy soul, till now contracted, wither'd, shrunk, 631
 Blighted by blasts of earth's unwholesome air,
 Will blossom here; spread all her faculties
 To these bright ardours; ev'ry power unfold,
 And rise into sublimities of thought. 635
 Stars teach as well as shine. At Nature's birth
 Thus their commission ran,—“Be kind to man.”
 Where art thou poor benighted traveller!
 The stars will light thee, tho' the moon should fail.
 Where art thou, more benighted! more astray! 640
 In ways immortal? the stars call thee back,
 And, if obey'd their counsel, set thee right.
 This prospect vast, what is it?—Weigh'd aright
 'Tis Nature's system of divinity,
 And ev'ry student of the night inspires. 645
 'Tis elder Scripture, writ by God's own hand;

* Night the Eighth.

Scripture authentic ! uncorrupt by man.
 Lorenzo ! with my radius (the rich gift
 Of thought nocturnal !) I'll point out to thee
 Its various lessons ; some that may surprise 650
 An unadept in mysteries of Night ;
 Little, perhaps, expected in her school,
 Nor thought to grow on planet or on star.
 Bulls, lions, scorpions, monsters, here we feign,
 Ourselves more monstrous, not to see what here 655
 Exists indeed,—a lecture to mankind.

What read we here ?—th' existence of a God ?
 Yes ; and of other beings man above ;
 Natives of ether ! sons of higher climes !
 And, what may move Lorenzo's wonder more, 660
 Eternity is written in the skies.
 And whose eternity ? Lorenzo ! thine ;
 Mankind's eternity. Nor faith alone,
 Virtue grows here ; here springs the sov'reign cure
 Of almost ev'ry vice, but chiefly thine, 665
 Wrath, pride, ambition, and impure desire.

Lorenzo ! thou canst wake at midnight too,
 Tho' not on morals bent. Ambition, Pleasure !
 Those tyrants I for thee so lately fought*,
 Afford their harass'd slaves but slender rest. 670
 Thou, to whom midnight is immoral noon,
 And the sun's noontide blaze prime dawn of day.
 Not by thy climate, but capricious crime,
 Commencing one of our antipodes !
 In thy nocturnal rove one moment halt, 675
 'Twixt stage and stage of riot and cabal,
 And lift thine eye, (if bold an eye to lift,
 If bold to meet the face of injur'd heaven)
 To yonder stars : for other ends they shine
 Than to light revellers from shame to shame, 680
 And thus be made accomplices in guilt.

Why from yon arch, that infinite of space,
 With infinite of lucid orbs replete,
 Which set the living firmament on fire
 At the first glance, in such an overwhelm 685

Of wonderful on man's astonish'd sight
Rushes Omnipotence?—To curb our pride,
Our reason rouse, and lead it to that Pow'r,
Whose love lets down these silver chains of light ;
To draw up man's ambition to himself, 690
And bind our chaste affections to his throne.

Thus the three virtues, least alive on earth,
And welcom'd on heaven's coast with most applause,
An humble, pure, and heavenly-minded heart,
Are here inspir'd ;—and canst thou gaze too long ?

Nor stands thy wrath depriv'd of its reproof, 696
Or unupbraided by this radiant choir.

The planets of each system represent
Kind neighbours ; mutual amity prevails ;
Sweet interchange of rays, receiv'd, return'd, 700
Enlight'ning and enlighten'd ! all, at once,

Attracting and attracted ! patriot-like,
None sins against the welfare of the whole ;
But their reciprocal, unselfish aid,
Affords an emblem of millennial love. 705

Nothing in nature, much less conscious being,
Was e'er created solely for itself.

Thus man his sov'reign duty learns in this
Material picture of benevolence.

And know, of all our supercilious race, 710
Thou most inflammable ! thou wasp of men !

Man's angry heart, inspected, would be found
As rightly set as are the starry spheres :

'Tis Nature's structure, broke by stubborn will,
Breeds all that uncelestial discord there. 715

Wilt thou not feel the bias Nature gave ?

Canst thou descend from converse with the skies,
And seize thy brother's throat?—For what?—a clod ?

An inch of earth ? The planets cry, " Forbear."

They chase our double darkness, Nature's gloom,
And (kinder still !) our intellectual night. 720

And see, Day's amiable sister sends
Her invitation in the softest rays

Of mitigated lustre ; courts thy sight,

Which suffers from her tyrant brother's blaze. 725

Night grants thee the full freedom of the skies,
 Nor rudely reprimands thy lifted eye ;
 With gain and joy she bribes thee to be wise.
 Night opes the noblest scenes, and sheds an awe
 Which gives those venerable scenes full weight, 730
 And deep reception in th' entender'd heart,
 While light peeps thro' the darkness like a spy,
 And darkness shews its grandeur by the light.
 Nor is the profit greater than the joy,
 If human hearts at glorious objects glow, 735
 And admiration can inspire delight.

What speak I more than I this moment feel ?
 With pleasing stupor first the soul is struck
 (Stupor ordain'd to make her truly wise !)
 Then into transports starting from her trance, 740
 With love and admiration how she glows !
 This gorgeous apparatus ! this display !
 This ostentation of creative pow'r !
 This theatre !—what eye can take it in ?
 By what divine enchantment was it rais'd, 745
 For minds of the first magnitude to launch
 In endless speculation, and adore ?
 One sun by day, by night ten thousand shine,
 And light us deep into the Deity ;
 How boundless in magnificence and might ! 750
 O what a confluence of ethereal fires,
 From urns unnumber'd, down the steep of heaven,
 Streams to a point, and centres in my sight !
 Nor tarries there ; I feel it at my heart :
 My heart at once it humbles and exalts ; 755
 Lays it in dust, and calls it to the skies.
 Who sees it unexalted, or unaw'd ?
 Who sees it, and can stop at what is seen ?
 Material offspring of Omnipotence !
 Inanimate, all-animating birth ! 760
 Work worthy him who made it ! worthy praise !
 All praise ! praise more than human ! nor deny'd
 Thy praise divine !—But tho' man, drown'd in sleep,
 Withholds his homage, not alone I wake ;
 Bright legions swarm unseen, and sing unheard 765

By mortal ear, the glorious Architect,
In this his universal temple hung
With lustres, with innumerable lights,
That shed religion on the soul ; at once
The temple and the preacher ! O how loud 770
It calls devotion ! genuine growth of Night !

Devotion ! daughter of Astronomy !

An undevout astronomer is mad.

True ; all things speak a God ; but in the small
Men trace out him ; in great he seizes man ; 775
Seizes, and elevates, and raps, and fills
With new inquiries, 'mid associates new.

Tell me, ye Stars ! ye Planets ! tell me, all
Ye starr'd and planeted Inhabitants ! what is it ?
What are these sons of wonder ? Say, proud Arch, 780
(Within whose azure palaces they dwell)

Built with divine ambition ! in disdain
Of limit built ! built in the taste of heaven !
Vast concave ! ample dome ! wast thou design'd
A meet apartment for the Deity ?— 785
Not so ; that thought alone thy state impairs,
Thy lofty sinks, and shallows thy profound,
And strengthens thy diffusive ; dwarfs the whole,
And makes an universe an Orrery.

But when I drop mine eye, and look on man, 790
Thy right regain'd, thy grandeur is restor'd,
O Nature ! wide flies off th' expanding round :

As when whole magazines, at once, are fir'd,
The smitten air is hollow'd by the blow,
The vast dislosion dissipates the clouds ; 795

Shock'd ether's billows dash the distant skies ;
Thus (but far more) th' expanding round flies off,
And leaves a mighty void, a spacious womb,
Might teem with new creation ; re-inflam'd,

Thy luminaries triumph, and assume 800
Divinity themselves. Nor was it strange

Matter high-wrought to such surprising pomp,
Such godlike glory, stole the style of gods,
From ages dark, obtuse, and steep'd in sense :
For sure to sense they truly are divine, 805

And half-absolv'd idolatry from guilt,
 Nay, turn'd it into virtue. Such it was
 In those who put forth all they had of man
 Unlost, to lift their thought, nor mounted higher,
 But weak of wings, on planets perch'd, and thought
 What was their highest must be their ador'd. 811

But they how weak who could no higher mount ?
 And are there, then, Lorenzo ! those to whom
 Unseen, and unexistent are the same ?

And if incomprehensible is join'd, 815
 Who dare pronounce it madness to believe ?

Why has the mighty Builder thrown aside
 All measure in his work ? stretch'd out his line
 So far, and spread amazement o'er the whole ?
 Then (as he took delight in wide extremes) 820

Deep in the bosom of his universe
 Dropp'd down that reas'ning mite, that insect, man,
 To crawl and gaze, and wonder at the scene ?—
 That man might ne'er presume to plead amazement
 For disbelief of wonders in himself. 825

Shall God be less miraculous than what
 His hand has form'd ? shall mysteries descend
 From unmysterious ? things more elevate
 Be more familiar ? uncreated lie
 More obvious than created to the grasp 830
 Of human thought ? The more of wonderful
 Is heard in him, the more we should assent.

Could we conceive him, God he could not be ;
 Or he not God, or we could not be men.
 A God alone can comprehend a God : 835

Man's distance how immense ! On such a theme,
 Know this, Lorenzo ! (seem it ne'er so strange)
 Nothing can satisfy but what confounds ;
 Nothing but what astonishes is true.

The scene thou seest attests the truth I sing, 840
 And ev'ry star sheds light upon thy creed.
 These stars, this furniture, this coast of heaven,
 If but reported, thou hadst ne'er believ'd ;
 But thine eye tells thee the romance is true.

The grand of Nature is th' Almighty's oath 845
In Reason's court, to silence Unbelief.

How my mind, op'ning at this scene, imbibes
The moral emanations of the skies,
While nought, perhaps, Lorenzo less admires!
Has the Great Sov'reign sent ten thousand worlds 850
To tell us he resides above them all
In Glory's unapproachable recess?
And dare earth's bold inhabitants deny
The sumptuous, the magnific embassy
A moment's audience? Turn we, nor will hear 855
From whom they come, or what they would impart
For man's emolument, sole cause that stoops
Their grandeur to man's eye? Lorenzo! rouse;
Let thought, awaken'd, take the lightning's wing,
And glance from east to west, from pole to pole. 860
Who sees but is confounded, or convinc'd?

Renounces reason, or a God adores?
Mankind was sent into the world to see:
Sight gives the science needful to their peace;
That obvious science asks small learning's aid. 865
Wouldst thou on metaphysic pinions soar?
Or wound thy patience amid logic thorns?
Or travel history's enormous round?
Nature no such hard task enjoins: she gave
A make to man directive of his thought; 870
A make set upright, pointing to the stars,
As who shall say, "Read thy chief lesson there."
Too late to read this manuscript of heaven,
When, like a parchment-scroll, shrunk up by flames,
It folds Lorenzo's lesson from his sight. 875

Lesson how various! not the God alone,
I see his ministers; I see, diffus'd
In radiant orders, essences sublime,
Of various offices, of various plume,
In heavenly liveries distinctly clad, 880
Azure, green, purple, pearl, or downy gold,
Or all commix'd: they stand, with wings outspread,
List'ning to catch the master's least command,
And fly thro' nature ere the moment ends;

Numbers innumerable!—Well conceiv'd 885
By Pagan and by Christian! O'er each sphere
Presides an angel, to direct its course,
And feed, or fan, its flames; or to discharge
Other high truits unknown: for who can see
Such pomp of matter, and imagine mind, 890
For which alone inanimate was made,
More sparingly dispens'd? That nobler son,
Far liker the great Sire!—'Tis thus the skies
Inform us of superiors numberless,
As much, in excellence, above mankind, 895
As above earth, in magnitude, the spheres.
These, as a cloud of witnesses, hang o'er us.
In a throng'd theatre are all our deeds.
Perhaps a thousand demi-gods descend
On ev'ry beam we see, to walk with men. 900
Awful reflection; strong restraint from ill!
Yet here our virtue finds still stronger aid
From these ethereal glories sense surveys.
Something, like magic, strikes from this blue vault:
With just attention is it view'd? we feel 905
A sudden succour, unimplor'd, unthought.
Nature herself does half the work of man.
Seas, rivers, mountains, forests, deserts, rocks,
The promontory's height, the depth profound
Of subterranean excavated grotts, 910
Black brow'd, and vaulted high, and yawning wide,
From Nature's structure, or the scoop of time;
If ample of dimension, vast of size,
Ev'n these an aggrandizing impulse give;
Of solemn thought enthusiastic heights 915
Ev'n these infuse.—But what of vast in these?
Nothing—or we must own the skies forgot.
Much less in art.—Vain Art! thou pigmy pow'r!
How dost thou swell, and strut with human pride,
To shew thy littleness! What childish toys, 920
Thy wat'ry columns squirted to the clouds!
Thy bason'd rivers and imprison'd seas!
Thy mountains moulded into forms of men!
Thy hundred gated capitals! or those

Where three days' travel left us much to ride ; 925
 Gazing on miracles by mortals wrought,
 Arches triumphal, theatres immense,
 Or nodding gardens pendent in mid air !
 Or temples proud to meet their gods half-way !
 Yet these affect us in no common kind : 930
 What then the force of such superior scenes ?
 Enter a temple, it will strike an awe :
 What awe from this the Deity has built ?
 A good man seen, tho' silent, counsel gives :
 The touch'd spectator wishes to be wise. 935
 In a bright mirror his own hands have made,
 Here we see something like the face of God.
 Seems it not then enough to say, Lorenzo,
 To man abandon'd, "Hast thou seen the skies ?"
 And yet so thwarted Nature's kind design 940
 By daring man, he makes her sacred awe
 (That guard from ill) his shelter, his temptation
 To more than common guilt, and quite inverts
 Celestial Art's intent. The trembling stars
 See crimes gigantic, stalking thro' the gloom 945
 With front erect, that hide their head by day,
 And making night still darker by their deeds.
 Slumb'ring in covert, till the shades descend,
 Rapine and murder, link'd, now prowl for prey.
 The miser earths his treasure, and the thief, 950
 Watching the mole, half-beggars him ere morn.
 Now plots and foul conspiracies awake,
 And, muffling up their horrors from the moon,
 Havoc and devastation they prepare,
 And kingdoms tott'ring in the field of blood. 955
 Now sons of riot in mid-revel rage.
 What shall I do ?—suppress it ? or proclaim ?—
 Why sleeps the thunder ? Now, Lorenzo ! now
 His best friend's couch the rank adulterer
 Ascends secure, and laughs at gods and men. 960
 Prepost'rous madmen, void of fear or shame,
 Lay their crimes bare to these chaste eyes of heaven,
 Yet shrink and shudder at a mortal's sight.
 Were moon and stars for vilians only made

To guide, yet screen them, with tenebrious light ?
 No ; they were made to fashion the sublime 966
 Of human hearts, and wiser make the wise.

Those ends were answer'd once, when mortals liv'd
 Of stronger wing, of aquiline ascent,
 In theory sublime. O how unlike 990

Those vermine of the night, this moment fung,
 Who crawl on earth, and on her venom feed !
 Those ancient sages, human stars ! they met
 Their brothers of the skies at midnight hour,
 Their counsel ask'd, and what they ask'd obey'd. 995

The Stagirite, and Plato, he who drank
 The poison'd bowl, and he of Tusculum,
 With him of Corduba (immortal names !)
 In these unbounded and Elysian walks,
 An area fit for Gods and godlike men, 980

They took their nightly round, thro' radiant paths,
 By seraphs trod ; instructed, chiefly thus,
 To tread in their bright footsteps here below,
 To walk in worth still brighter than the skies.
 There they contracted their contempt of earth ; 985
 Of hopes eternal kindled there the fire ;

There, as in near approach, they glow'd, and grew
 (Great visitants !) more intimate with God,
 More worth to men, more joyous to themselves.

Thro' various virtues they, with ardour, ran 990
 The zodiac of their learn'd illustrious lives.

In Christian hearts O for a Pagan zeal !
 A needful, but opprobrious pray'r ! as much
 Our ardour less, as greater is our light.

How monstrous this in morals ! Scarce more strange
 Would this phenomenon in nature strike, 996
 A sun that froze her, or a star that warm'd.

What taught these heroes of the moral world ?
 To these thou giv'st thy praise, give credit too.
 These doctors ne'er were pension'd to deceive thee,
 And Pagan tutors are thy taste—They taught 1001
 That narrow views betray to misery ;
 That wise it is to comprehend the whole ;
 That virtue rose from nature, ponder'd well

The single base of virtue built to heav'n ;
 That God and nature our attention claim ;
 That nature is the glass reflecting God,
 As by the sea reflected is the sun,
 Too glorious to be gaz'd on in his sphere ;
 That, mind immortal loves immortal aims ;
 That, boundless mind affects a boundless space ;
 That vast surveys, and the sublime of things,
 The soul assimilate, and make her great ;
 That, therefore, heaven her glories, as a fund
 Of inspiration, thus spreads out to man.
 Such are their doctrines ; such the night inspir'd.

And what more true? What truth of greater weight?
 The soul of man was made to walk the skies,
 Delightful outlet of her prison here !
 There, disincumber'd from her chains, the ties
 Of toys terrestrial, she can rove at large ;
 There freely can respire, dilate, extend,
 In full proportion let loose all her powers,
 And, undeluded, grasp at something great.
 Nor, as a stranger does she wander there,
 But, wonderful herself, thro' wonder strays ;
 Contemplating their grandeur, finds her own ;
 Dives deep in their œconomy divine,
 Sits high in judgment on their various laws,
 And, like a master, judges not amiss.
 Hence greatly pleas'd, and justly proud, the soul
 Grows conscious of her birth celestial ; breathes
 More life, more vigour, in her native air,
 And feels herself at home amongst the stars,
 And, feeling, emulates her country's praise.

What call we then the firmament, Lorenzo?—

As earth the body, since the skies sustain
 The soul with food that gives immortal life,
 Call it the noble pasture of the mind,
 Which there expatiates, strengthens, and exults,
 And riots thro' the luxuries of thought.
 Call it the garden of the deity,
 Blossom'd with stars, redundant in the growth
 Of fruit ambrosial, moral fruit to man.

Call it the breast-plate of the true high-priest, 1045
 Ardent with gems oracular, that give,
 In points of highest moment, right response;
 And ill-neglected, if we prize our peace.

Thus have we found a true astrology;
 Thus have we found a new and noble sense, 1050
 In which alone stars govern human fates.

O that the stars (as some have feign'd) let fall
 Bloodshed, and havock, on embattled realms,
 And rescu'd monarchs from so black a guilt!
 Bourbon! this wish how gen'rous in a foe! 1055

Wouldst thou be great, wouldst thou become a god,
 And stick thy deathless name among the stars,
 For mighty conquests on a needle's point?
 Instead of forging chains for foreigners,
 Bastile thy tutor; grandeur all thy aim? 1060

As yet thou know'st not what it is. How great,
 How glorious, then, appears the mind of man,
 When in it all the stars and planets roll!
 And what it seems it is. Great objects make
 Great minds, enlarging as their views enlarge; 1065
 Those still more godlike as these more divine.

And more divine than these thou canst not see.
 Dazzled, o'erpower'd, with the delicious draught
 Of miscellaneous splendours, how I reel
 From thought to thought, inebriate, without end!
 An Eden this! a Paradise unlost! 1071

I meet the deity in ev'ry view,
 And tremble at my nakedness before him!
 O that I could but reach the tree of life!
 For here it grows unguarded from our taste; 1075
 No flaming sword denies our entrance here:
 Would man but gather, he might live for ever.

Lorenzo! much of moral hast thou seen:
 Of curious arts art thou more fond? then mark
 The mathematic glories of the skies, 1080
 In number, weight, and measure, all ordain'd.
 Lorenzo's boasted builders, Chance and Fate,
 Are left to finish his aërial towers:
 Wisdom and Choice their well known characters

Here deep impress, and claim it for their own. 1085

Though splendid all, no splendor void of use.

Use rivals beauty; art contends with power;

No wanton waste amid effuse expence,

The great œconomist adjusting all

To prudent pomp, magnificently wise. 1090

How rich the prospect! and for ever new:

And newest to the man that views it most;

For newer still in infinite succeeds.

Then these aërial racers, O how swift!

How the shaft loiters from the strongest string! 1095

Spirit alone can distance the career.

Orb above orb ascending without end!

Circle in circle, without end, enclos'd!

Wheel within wheel, Ezekiel! like to thine!

Like thine, it seems a vision or a dream; 1100

Though seen, we labour to believe it true.

What involution! what extent! what swarms

Of worlds, that laugh at earth! immensely great!

Immensely distant from each other's spheres!

What, then, the wond'rous space thro' which they roll?

At once it quite ingulfs all human thought; 1106

'Tis Comprehension's absolute defeat.

Nor think thou seest a wild disorder here:

Through this illustrious chaos to the sight,

Arrangement neat, and chastest order, reign. 1110

The path prescrib'd, inviolably kept,

Upbraids the lawless fallies of mankind.

Worlds, ever thwarting, never interfere:

What knots are ty'd! how soon are they dissolv'd,

And set the seeming marry'd planets free! 1115

They rove for ever, without error rove;

Confusion unconfus'd! nor less admire

This tumult untumultuous; all on wing!

In motion all! yet what profound repose!

What fervid action, yet no noise! as aw'd 1120

To silence by the presence of their Lord;

Or hush'd, by his command, in love to man,

And bid let fall soft beams on human rest,

Restless themselves. On yon cerulean plain

In exultation to their God and thine, 1125
 They dance, they sing eternal jubilee,
 Eternal celebration of his praise.

But, since their song arrives not at our ear,
 Their dance perplex'd exhibits to the sight
 Fair hieroglyphic of his peerless power. 1130
 Mark how the labyrinthian turns they take,
 The circles intricate, and mystic maze,
 Weave the grand cypher of omnipotence;
 To gods how great! how legible to man!

Leaves so much wonder greater wonder still? 1135
 Where are the pillars that support the skies?
 What more than Atlantean shoulder props
 Th' incumbent load? what magic, what strange art,
 In fluid air these pond'rous orbs sustains?
 Who would not think them hung in golden chains?—
 And so they are; in the high will of heaven, 1141
 Which fixes all; makes adamant of air,
 Or air of adamant; makes all of nought,
 Or nought of all, if such the dread decree.

Imagine from their deep foundations torn 1145
 The most gigantic sons of earth, the broad
 And tow'ring Alps, all tofs'd into the sea;
 And, light as down, or volatile as air,
 Their bulks enormous dancing on the waves,
 In time and measure exquisite; while all 1150
 The winds, in emulation of the spheres,
 Tune their sonorous instruments aloft,
 The concert swell, and animate the ball.
 Would this appear amazing? what then worlds
 In a far thinner element sustain'd, 1155
 And acting the same part with greater skill,
 More rapid movement, and for noblest ends?

More obvious ends to pass, are not these stars
 The seats majestic, proud imperial thrones,
 On which angelic delegates of heaven, 1160
 At certain periods, as the sov'reign nods,
 Discharge high trusts of vengeance or of love,
 To clothe in outward grandeur grand design,
 And acts most solemn still more solemnize?

Ye citizens of air ! what ardent thanks,
What full effusion of the grateful heart
Is due from man, indulg'd in such a fight !
A fight so noble ! and a fight so kind !
It drops new truths at ev'ry new survey !
Feels not Lorenzo something stir within 1170
That sweeps away all period ? As these spheres
Measure duration, they no less inspire
The godlike hope of ages without end.
The boundless space, through which these rovers take
Their restless roam, suggests the sister thought 1175
Of boundless time. Thus by kind Nature's skill,
To man unlabour'd, that important guest,
Eternity, finds entrance at the sight ;
And an eternity for man ordain'd,
Or these his destin'd midnight counsellors, 1180
The stars, had never whisper'd it to man.
Nature informs, but ne'er insults, her sons :
Could she then kindle the most ardent wish
To disappoint it ?—That is blasphemy.
Thus of thy creed a second article, 1185
Momentous as th' existence of a God,
Is found (as I conceive) where rarely sought,
And thou may'st read thy soul immortal here.
Here, then, Lorenzo ! on these glories dwell,
Nor want the gilt, illuminated roof, 1190
That calls the wretched gay to dark delights.
Assemblies ?—this is one divinely bright ;
Here unendanger'd in health, wealth, or fame,
Range thro' the fairest, and the Sultan scorn.
He, wise as thou, no crescent holds so fair 1195
As that which on his turban awes the world,
And thinks the moon is proud to copy him.
Look on her, and gain more than worlds can give,
A mind superior to the charms of pow'r,
Thou muffled in delusions of this life ! 1200
Can yonder moon turn Ocean in his bed
From side to side in constant ebb and flow,
And purify from stench his wat'ry realms ?
And fails her moral influence ? wants she pow'r

To turn Lorenzo's stubborn tide of thought 1205
 From stagnating on earth's infected shore,
 And purge from nuisance his corrupted heart?
 Fails her attraction when it draws to heaven?
 Nay, and to what thou valu'st more, earth's joy?
 Minds elevate, and panting for unseen, 1210
 And defecate from sense, alone obtain
 Full relish of existence undeflower'd,
 The life of life, the zest of worldly bliss;
 All else on earth amounts—to what? to this,
 "Bad to be suffer'd, blessings to be left:" 1215
 Earth's richest inventory boasts no more.

Of higher scenes be then the call obey'd.
 O let me gaze!—of gazing there's no end.
 O let me think!—thought, too, is wilder'd here;
 In midway flight Imagination tires; 1220
 Yet soon re-prunes her wing to soar anew,
 Her point unable to forbear or gain;
 So great the pleasure, so profound the plan!
 A banquet this where men and angels meet,
 Eat the same manna, mingle earth and heav'n. 1225
 How distant some of these nocturnal suns!
 So distant, (says the sage) 'twere not absurd
 To doubt if beams, set out at Nature's birth,
 Are yet arriv'd at this so foreign world,
 Tho' nothing half so rapid as their flight. 1230
 An eye of awe and wonder let me roll,
 And roll for ever. Who can satiate sight
 In such a scene? in such an ocean wide
 Of deep astonishment, where depth, height, breadth,
 Are lost in their extremes; and where to count 1235
 The thick-fown glories in this field of fire,
 Perhaps a seraph's computation fails.
 Now go, Ambition! boast thy boundless might
 In conquest o'er the tenth part of a grain.

And yet Lorenzo calls for miracles, 1240
 To give his tott'ring faith a solid base.
 Why call for less than is already thine?
 Thou art no novice in theology;
 What is a miracle?—'tis a reproach,

'Tis an implicit satire on mankind,
And while it satisfies it censures too.
To common-sense great nature's course proclaims
A Deity. When mankind falls asleep,
A miracle is sent as an alarm
To wake the world, and prove him o'er again. 1250
By recent argument, but not more strong.
Say which imports more plenitude of pow'r,
Or Nature's laws to fix, or to repeal?
To make a sun, or stop his mid career?
To countermand his orders, and send back 1255
The flaming courier to the frightened east,
Warm'd and astonish'd at his ev'ning ray;
Or bid the moon, as with her journey tir'd,
In Ajalon's soft flow'ry vale repose?
Great things are these; still greater to create. 1260
From Adam's bow'r look down thro' the whole train
Of miracles; restless is their pow'r,
They do not, cannot, more amaze the mind,
Than this, call'd unmiraculous survey,
If duly weigh'd, if rationally seen, 1265
If seen with human eyes. The brute, indeed,
Sees nought but spangles here; the fool no more.
Say'st thou, "The course of Nature governs all?"
The course of Nature is the art of God.
The miracles thou call'st for this attest; 1270
For say, could Nature Nature's course control?
But, miracles apart, who sees him not
Nature's controller, author, guide, and end?
Who turns his eye on Nature's midnight face,
But must enquire- "What hand behind the scene, 1275
"What arm almighty, put these wheeling globes
"In motion, and wound up the vast machine,
"Who rounded in his palm these spacious orbs?
"Who bowl'd them flaming thro' the dark profound,
"Num'rous as glitt'ring gems of morning-dew, 1280
"Or sparks from populous cities in a blaze,
"And set the bosom of old Night on fire,
"Peopled her desert, and made Horror smile?"
Or, if the military style delights thee, 1284

(For stars have fought their battles, leagu'd with man)
 "Who marshals this bright host? enrols their names,
 "Appoints their post, their marches, their returns,
 "Punctual, at stated periods? who disbands
 "These vet'ran troops, their final duty done,
 "If e'er disbanded?"—He whose potent word, 1290
 Like the loud trumpet, levy'd first their pow'rs
 In Night's inglorious empire, where they slept
 In beds of darkness; arm'd them with fierce flames;
 Arrang'd, and disciplin'd, and cloth'd in gold,
 And call'd them out of Chaos to the field, 1295
 Where now they war with Vice and Unbelief.
 O let us join this army! joining these
 Will give us hearts intrepid at that hour
 When brighter flames shall cut a darker night;
 When these strong demonstrations of a God 1300
 Shall hide their heads, or tumble from their spheres,
 And one eternal curtain cover all!

Struck at that thought, as new-awak'd, I lift
 A more enlighten'd eye, and read the stars
 To man still more propitious, and their aid 1305
 (Tho' guiltless of idolatry) implore,
 Nor longer rob them of their noblest name.
 O ye dividers of my time! ye bright
 Accomptants of my days, and months, and years,
 In your fair calendar distinctly mark'd! 1310
 Since that authentic, radiant register,
 Tho' man inspects it not, stands good against him!
 Since you and years roll on, tho' man stands still,
 Teach me my days to number, and apply
 My trembling heart to wisdom, now beyond 1315
 All shadow of excuse for fooling on.
 Age smoothes our path to prudence; sweeps aside
 The snares keen appetite, and passion spread
 To catch stray fools; and woe to that grey head
 Whose folly would undo what age has done! 1320
 Aid, then, aid, all ye stars!—Much rather thou,
 Great artist! thou whose finger set aright
 This exquisite machine, with all its wheels,
 Tho' intervolv'd, exact, and pointing out

Life's rapid and irrevocable flight,
 With such an index fair as none can miss
 Who lifts an eye, nor sleeps till it is clos'd;
 Open mine eye, dread Deity! to read
 The tacit doctrine of thy works; to see
 Things as they are, unalter'd thro' the glass
 Of worldly wishes. Time, eternity!
 ('Tis these, mismeasur'd, ruin all mankind)
 Set them before me; let me lay them both
 In equal scale, and learn their various weight.
 Let time appear a moment, as it is,
 And let eternity's full orb, at once,
 Turn on my soul, and strike it into heav'n.
 When shall I see far more than charms me now,
 Gaze on creation's model in thy breast
 Unveil'd, nor wonder at the transcript more?
 When this vile, foreign dust, which smothers all
 That travel earth's deep vale, shall I shake off?
 When shall my soul her incarnation quit,
 And, re-adopted to thy blest'd embrace,
 Obtain her apotheosis in thee?
 Dost think Lorenzo, this is wand'ring wide?
 No; 'tis directly striking at the mark,
 To wake thy dead devotion * was my point;
 And how I blest'd Night's consecrating shades,
 Which to a temple turn an universe,
 Fill us with great ideas, full of heaven,
 And antidote the pestilential earth!
 In ev'ry storm that either frowns or falls,
 What an asylum has the soul in pray'r!
 And what a fane is this in which to pray!
 And what a God must dwell in such a fane!
 O what a genius must inform the skies!
 And is Lorenzo's salamander-heart
 Cold and untouch'd, amid these sacred fires?
 O ye nocturnal sparks! ye glowing embers,
 On heaven's broad hearth! who burn, or burn no more,
 Who blaze, or die, as great Jehovah's breath
 Or blows you or forbears, assist my song;

Pour your whole influence ; exercise this heart,
So long possess'd, and bring him back to man. 1365

And is Lorenzo a demurrer still ?

Pride in thy parts provokes thee to contest,
Truths, which, contested, put thy parts to shame :
Nor shame they more Lorenzo's head than heart,
A faithless heart, how despicably small ! 1370

Too strait aught great or gen'rous to receive !
Fill'd with an atom ! fill'd and foul'd with self !
And self-mistaken ! self, that lasts an hour !

Instincts and passions of the nobler kind
Lie suffocated there, or they alone, 1375

Reason apart, would wake high hope, and open,
To ravish'd thought, that intellectual sphere,
Where Order, Wisdom, Goodness, Providence,
Their endless miracles of love display,
And promise all the truly great desire. 1380

The mind that would be happy must be great ;
Great in its wishes, great in its surveys.
Extended views a narrow mind extend,
Push out its corrugate, expansive make,
Which, ere long, more than planets shall embrace.
A man of compass makes a man of worth. 1386
Divine contemplate, and become divine.

As man was made for glory and for bliss,
All littleness is in approach to woe.
Open thy bosom, set thy wishes wide, 1390
And let in manhood ; let in happiness ;
Admit the boundless theatre of thought
From nothing, up to God, which makes a man.
Take God from Nature, nothing great is left ;
Man's mind is in a pit, and nothing sees ; 1395

Man's heart is in a jakes, and loves the mire.
Emerge from thy profound ; erect thine eye ;
See thy distress ! how close thou art besieg'd !
Besieg'd by Nature, the proud sceptic's foe !
Enclos'd by these innumerable worlds, 1400
Sparkling conviction on the darkest mind,
As in a golden net of Providence,
How art thou caught, sure captive of belief !

From this thy blest'd captivity, what art,
What blasphemy to reason, sets thee free ! 1405
This scene is heaven's indulgent violence ;
Canst thou bear up against this tide of glory ?
What is earth bosom'd in these ambient orbs,
But faith in God impos'd, and press'd on man ?
Dar'st thou still litigate thy desp'rate cause, 1410
Spite of these num'rous awful witnesses,
And doubt the deposition of the skies ?
O how laborious is thy way to ruin !

Laborious ! 'tis impracticable quite :
To sink beyond a doubt in this debate, 1415
With all its weight of wisdom and of will,
And crime flagitious, I defy a fool.
Some wish they did, but no man disbelieves.
God is a spirit ; spirit cannot strike
These gross material organs ! God by man 1420
As much is seen as man a God can see
In these astonishing exploits of power.
What order, beauty, motion, distance, size !
Conception of design, how exquisite !
How complicate in their divine police ! 1425
Apt means ! great ends ! consent to gen'ral good !—
Each attribute of these material gods,
So long (and that with specious pleas) ador'd,
A sep'rate conquest gains o'er rebel thought,
And leads in triumph the whole mind of man. 1430

Lorenzo ! this may seem harangue to thee ;
Such all is apt to seem that thwarts our will.
And dost thou then demand a simple proof
Of this great master moral of the skies,
Unskill'd, or disinclin'd, to read it there ? 1435
Since 'tis the basis, and all drops without it,
Take it in one compact, unbroken chain ;
Such proof insists on an attentive ear,
'Twill not make one amid a mob of thoughts,
And for thy notice struggle with the world. 1440
Retire ;—the world shut out ;—thy thoughts call
Imagination's airy wing repress ;— [home ;—
Lock up thy senses ;—let no passion stir ;—

Wake all to Reason ;—let her reign alone ;—
 Then in thy soul's deep silence, and the depth 1445
 Of Nature's silence, midnight, thus inquire,
 As I have done, and shall inquire no more.
 In Nature's channel thus the questions run.

“ What am I ? and from whence ?—I nothing know
 “ But that I am ; and since I am, conclude 1450
 “ Something eternal : had there e'er been nought,
 “ Nought still had been : eternal there must be,—
 “ But what eternal ? Why not human race ?
 “ And Adam's ancestors without an end ?
 “ That's hard to be conceiv'd, since ev'ry link 1455
 “ Of that long-chain'd succession is so frail.
 “ Can ev'ry part depend, and not the whole ?
 “ Yet grant it true, new difficulties rise ?
 “ I'm still quite out at sea, nor see the shore. 1459
 “ Whence earth, and these bright orbs ?—Eternal
 “ Grant matter was eternal, still these orbs [too ?—
 “ Would want some other father ;—much design
 “ Is seen in all their motions, all their makes.
 “ Design implies intelligence and art : 1464
 “ That can't be from themselves—or man : that art
 “ Man scarce can comprehend, could men bestow ?
 “ And nothing greater yet allow'd than man,—
 “ Who motion, foreign to the smallest grain,
 “ Shot thro' vast masses of enormous weight ?
 “ Who bid brute Matter's restive lump assume 1470
 “ Such various forms, and gave it wings to fly ?
 “ Has matter innate motion ? then each atom,
 “ Asserting its indisputable right
 “ To dance, would form an universe of dust : 1474
 “ Has matter none ? then whence these glorious forms
 “ And boundless flights from shapeless and repos'd ?
 “ Has matter more than motion ? has it thought,
 “ Judgement, and genius ? is it deeply learn'd
 “ In mathematics ? has it fram'd such laws, 1479
 “ Which but to guess a Newton made immortal ?—
 “ If so, how each sage atom laughs at me,
 “ Who think a clod inferior to a man !
 “ If art to form, and counsel to conduct,

“ And that with greater far than human skill,
 “ Resides not in each block,—a Godhead reigns.—
 “ Grant, then, invifible, eternal Mind ; 1486
 “ That granted, all is folv’d :—but, granting that,
 “ Draw I not o’er me a ftill darker cloud ?
 “ Grant I not that which I can ne’er conceive ?
 “ A being without origin or end ! 1490
 “ Hail, human Liberty ! there is no God—
 “ Yet why ! on either fcheme that knot fubfifts ;
 “ Subfift it muft in God or human race ;
 “ If in the laft, how many knots befide,
 “ Indiffoluble all ?—Why chufe it there, 1495
 “ Where, chofen, ftill fubfift ten thoufand more ?
 “ Reject it where, that chofen, all the reft,
 “ Difpers’d, leave Reason’s whole horizon clear ;
 “ This is not Reason’s dictate : Reason fays,
 “ Close with the fide where one grain turns the fcale ;
 “ What vaft preponderance is here ! Can Reason 1501
 “ With louder voice exclaim—Believe a God ?
 “ And Reason heard, is the fole mark of man.
 “ What things impoffible muft man think true
 “ On any other fystem ! and how ftange 1505
 “ To difbelive thro’ mere credulity !”

If in this chain Lorenzo finds no flaw,
 Let it for ever bind him to belief.

And where the link, in which a flaw he finds ?
 And if a God there is, that God how great ! 1510
 How great that power whose providential care
 Thro’ thefe bright orbs’ dark centres darts a ray !
 Of Nature univerfal threads the whole !
 And hangs creation, like a precious gem,
 Tho’ little, on the footftool of his throne ! 1515

That little gem how large ! A weight let fall
 From a fix’d ftar, in ages can it reach
 This diftant earth ? Say, then, Lorenzo ! where,
 Where ends this mighty building ? where begin
 The fuburbs of creation ? where the wall, 1520
 Whole battlements look o’er into the vale
 Of non-exiftence, Nothing’s ftange abode !
 Say at what point of fpace Jehovah dropp’d

His slacken'd line, and laid his balance by ;
 Weigh'd worlds, and measur'd infinite no more ? 1525
 Where rears his terminating pillar high
 Its extramundane head ? and says to gods,
 In characters illustrious as the sun,
 " I stand, the plan's proud period ; I pronounce
 " The work accomplish'd : the creation clos'd : 1530
 " Shout, all ye Gods ! nor shout, ye Gods, alone ;
 " Of all that lives, or, if devoid of life,
 " That rests, or rolls, ye heights and depths, resound !
 " Resound ! resound ! ye depths and heights, resound."

Hard are those questions !—answer harder still. 1535
 Is this the sole exploit, the single birth,
 The solitary son of Power Divine ?
 Or has the Almighty Father with a breath
 Impregnated the womb of distant space ?
 Has he not bid, in various provinces, 1540
 Brother-creations the dark bowels burst
 Of Night primeval, barren now no more ?
 And he the central sun, transpiercing all
 Those giant-generations which disport,
 And dance as motes, in his meridian ray, 1545
 That ray withdrawn, benighted, or absorb'd
 In that abyss of horror whence they sprung ;
 While Chaos triumphs, repossess'd of all
 Rival Creation ravish'd from his throne ?
 Chaos ! of Nature both the womb and grave ! 1550

Think'st thou my scheme, Lorenzo, spreads too
 Is this extravagant ?—No ! this is just ; [wide ?
 Just in conjecture, though 'twere false in fact.
 If 'tis an error, 'tis an error sprung
 From noble root, high thought of the Most High.
 But wherefore error ? who can prove it such ? 1555
 He that can set Omnipotence a bound.
 Can man conceive beyond what God can do ?
 Nothing but quite impossible is hard.
 He summons into being, with like ease, 1560
 A whole creation, and a single grain.
 Speaks he the word ? a thousand worlds are born !
 A thousand worlds ? there's space for millions more ;

And in what space can his great fiat fail ?

Condemn me not, cold critic, but indulge 1565

The warm imagination : why condemn ?

Why not indulge such thoughts as swell our hearts

With fuller admiration of that Power

Who gives our hearts with such high thoughts to swell ?

Why not indulge in his augmented praise ? 1570

Darts not his glory a still brighter ray,

The less is left to Chaos and the realms

Of hideous night, where Fancy strays aghast,

And, though most talkative, makes no report.

Still seems my thought enormous ? think again ;

Experience self shall aid thy lame belief. 1575

Glasses, (that revelation to the sight)

Have they not led us in the deep disclose

Of fine-spun nature, exquisitely small,

And, though demonstrated, still ill-conceiv'd ? 1580

If then on the reverse the mind would mount

In magnitude, what mind can mount too far,

To keep the balance, and creation poise ;

Defect alone can err on such a theme :

What is too great, if we the cause survey ? 1585

Stupendous Architect ! thou, thou art all

My soul flies up and down in thoughts of thee,

And finds herself but at the centre still !

I Am, thy name ! existence all thine own !

Creation's nothing, flatter'd much if styl'd 1590

“ The thin, the fleeting atmosphere of God.”

Oh for the voice—of what ? of whom ? what voice ?

Can answer to my wants, in such ascent

As dares to deem one universe too small ?

Tell me, Lorenzo, (for now fancy glows, 1595

Fir'd in the vortex of almighty power)

Is not this home creation, in the map

Of universal nature, as a speck,

Like fair Britannia, in our little ball ;

Exceeding fair, and glorious, for its size, 1600

But, elsewhere, far outmeasured, far outshone ?

In fancy (for the fact beyond us lies)

Canst thou not figure it, an isle, almost

Two small for notice in the vast of being;
Sever'd, by mighty seas of unbuilt space, 1605
From other realms; from ample continents
Of higher life, where nobler natives dwell;
Less northern, less remote from Deity,
Glowing beneath the line of the Supreme,
Where souls in excellence make haste, put forth 1610
Luxuriant growths, nor the late autumn wait
Of human worth, but ripen soon to gods?
Yet, why drown Fancy in such depths as these?
Return, presumptuous rover, and confess
The bounds of man, nor blame them as too small.
Enjoy we not full scope in what is seen? 1616
Full ample the dominions of the sun!
Full glorious to behold! how far, how wide,
The matchless monarch from his flaming throne,
Lavish of lustre, throws his beams about him, 1620
Farther and faster than a thought can fly,
And feeds his planets with eternal fires!
This Heliopolis, by greater far
Than the proud tyrant of the Nile was built,
And he alone who built it can destroy. 1625
Beyond this city why strays human thought?
One wonderful enough for man to know!
One infinite enough for man to range!
One firmament enough for man to read!
O what voluminous instruction here! 1630
What page of wisdom is deny'd him? none,
If learning his chief lesson makes him wise.
Nor is instruction here our only gain;
There dwells a noble pathos in the skies,
Which warms our passions, proselytes our hearts.
How eloquently shines the glowing pole! 1636
With what authority it gives its charge,
Remonstrating great truths in style sublime,
Tho' silent, loud I heard earth around; above
The planets heard, and not unheard in hell; 1640
Hell has her wonder, tho' too proud to praise.
Is earth then more infernal? has she those
Who neither praise (Lorenzo!) nor admire?

Lorenzo's admiration, pre-engag'd,
Ne'er ask'd the moon one question; never held 1645
Least correspondence with a single star;
Ne'er rear'd an altar to the queen of heaven
Walking in brightness, or her train ador'd.
Their sublunary rivals have long since
Engross'd his whole devotion; stars malign, 1650
Which made the fond astronomer run mad,
Darken his intellect, corrupt his heart;
Cause him to sacrifice his fame and peace
To momentary madness, call'd Delight:
Idolater more gross than ever kiss'd 1655
The lifted hand to Luna, or pour'd out
The blood to Jove!—O thou, to whom belongs
All sacrifice! O thou great Jove unfeign'd!
Divine Instructor! thy first volume this
For man's perusal; all in capitals! 1660
In moon and stars (heaven's golden alphabet!)
Emblaz'd to seize the sight, who runs may read;
Who reads can understand. 'Tis unconfin'd
To Christian land or Jewry; fairly writ,
In language universal to mankind; 1665
A language lofty to the learn'd, yet plain
To those that feed the flock, or guide the plough,
Or from his husk strike out the bounding grain;
A language worthy the great mind that speaks!
Preface and comment to the sacred page! 1670
Which oft refers its reader to the skies,
As pre-supposing his first lesson there,
And scripture 'self a fragment, that unread.
Stupendous book of wisdom to the wise!
Stupendous book! and open'd, Night! by thee. 1675
By thee much open'd, I confess, O Night!
Yet more I wish, but how shall I prevail?
Say, gentle Night! whose modest, maiden beams,
Give us a new creation, and present
The world's great picture soften'd to the sight; 1680
Nay, kinder far, far more indulgent still,
Say thou, whose mild dominion's silver key
Unlocks our hemisphere, and sets to view

Worlds beyond number, worlds conceal'd by day
 Behind the proud and envious star of noon ! 1685
 Canst thou not draw a deeper scene—and shew
 The Mighty Potentate to whom belong
 These rich regalia, pompously display'd
 To kindle that high hope ? Like him of Uz,
 I gaze around, I search on ev'ry side— 1690
 O for a glimpse of him my soul adores !
 As the chas'd hart, amid the desert waste,
 Pants for the living stream, for him who made her
 So pants the thirsty soul amid the blank
 Of sublunary joys. Say, goddess, where ? 1695
 Where blazes his bright court ? where burns his throne ?
 Thou know'st, for thou art near him ; by thee, round
 His grand pavilion, sacred Fame reports
 The sable curtain drawn. If not, can none
 Of thy fair daughter train, so swift of wing, 1700
 Who travel far, discover where he dwells ?
 A star his dwelling pointed out below.
 Ye Pleiades ! Arcturus ! Mazaroth !
 And thou, Orion ! of still keener eye !
 Say ye, who guide the wilder'd in the waves, 1705
 And bring them out of tempest into port !
 On which hand must I bend my course to find him ?
 These courtiers keep the secret of their king ;
 I wake whole nights in vain to steal it from them.
 I wake, and, waking, climb Night's radiant scale
 From sphere to sphere, the steps by nature set 1710
 For man's ascent, at once to tempt and aid ;
 To tempt his eye, and aid his tow'ring thought,
 Till it arrives at the great goal of all.
 In ardent Contemplation's rapid car, 1715
 From earth as from my barrier, I set out.
 How swift I mount ! diminish'd earth recedes :
 I pass the moon ; and, from her farther side,
 Pierce heaven's blue curtain : strike into remote :
 Where, with his lifted tube, the subtle sage 1720
 His artificial airy journey takes,
 And to celestial lengthens human sight.
 I pause at ev'ry planet on my road,

And ask for him who gives their orbs to roll,
 Their foreheads fair to shine. From Saturn's ring,
 In which of earths an army might be lost, 1726
 With the bold comet take my bolder flight,
 Amid those sov'reign glories of the skies,
 Of independent, native lustre proud;
 The souls of systems! and the lords of life, 1730
 Through their wide empires!—What behold I now?
 A wilderness of wonder burning round,
 Where larger sons inhabit higher spheres;
 Perhaps the villas of descending gods;
 Nor halt I here? my toil is but begun; 1735
 'Tis but the threshold of the Deity;
 Or, far beneath it, I am grov'ling still,
 Nor is it strange; I built on a mistake:
 The grandeur of his works, whence Folly sought
 For aid, to Reason sets his glory higher; 1740
 Who built thus high for worms (mere worms to him)
 O where, Lorenzo! must the builder dwell?

Pause, then, and, for a moment, here respire—
 If human thought can keep its station here.
 Where am I?—where is earth?—nay, where art thou,
 O Sun?—Is the sun turn'd recluse?—and are 1746
 His boasted expeditions short to mine?
 To mine how short! On Nature's Alps I stand,
 And see a thousand firmaments beneath!
 A thousand systems! as a thousand grains! 1750
 So much a stranger, and so late arriv'd,
 How can man's curious spirit not inquire
 What are the natives of this world sublime,
 Of this so foreign, unterrestrial sphere,
 Where mortal, untranslated, never stray'd? 1755

“ O ye, as distant from my little home
 “ As swiftest sunbeams in an age can fly!
 “ Far from my native element I roam,
 “ In quest of new and wonderful to man.
 “ What province this, of his immense domain? 1760
 “ Whom all obeys? or mortals here, or gods?
 “ Ye bord'ers on the coast of bliss! what are you?
 “ A colony from heaven? or only rais'd,

- “ By frequent visit from heaven's neighb'ring realms,
 “ To secondary gods, and half divine? 1765
 “ Whate'er your nature, this is past dispute,
 “ Far other life you live, far other tongue
 “ You talk, far other thought, perhaps, you think,
 “ Than man. How various are the works of God!
 “ But say, what thought? Is Reason here enthron'd,
 “ And absolute? or Sense in arms against her? 1771
 “ Have you two lights? or need you no reveal'd?
 “ Enjoy your happy realms their golden age?
 “ And had your Eden an abstemious Eve?
 “ Our Eve's fair daughters prove their pedigree, 1775
 “ And ask their Adams—“ Who would not be wise?”
 “ Or if your mother fell, are you redeem'd?
 “ And if redeem'd—is your redeemer scorn'd?
 “ Is this your final residence? if not,
 “ Change you your scene translated? or by death? 1780
 “ And if by death, what death?—Know you disease,
 “ Or horrid war?—With war, this fatal hour,
 “ Europa groans (so call we a small field
 “ Where king's run mad.) In our world, Death deputed
 “ Intemperance to do the work of Age, 1785
 “ And hanging up the quiver Nature gave him,
 “ As slow of execution, for dispatch
 “ Sends forth imperial butchers; bids them slay
 “ Their sheep, (the silly sheep they fleec'd before)
 “ And to's him twice ten thousand at a meal. 1790
 “ Sit all your executioners on Thrones?
 “ With you can rage for plunder make a god?
 “ And bloodshed wash out ev'ry other stain?—
 “ But you perhaps can't bleed: from matter gross
 “ Your spirits clean are delicately clad 1795
 “ In fine-spun ether, privileg'd to soar,
 “ Unloaded, uninfected. How unlike
 “ The lot of man! how few of human race
 “ By their own mud unmurder'd; how we wage
 “ Self-war eternal!—Is your painful day 1800
 “ Of hardy conflict o'er? or are you still
 “ Raw candidates at school? and have you those
 “ Who disaffect reversions, as with us?—

" But what are we ? you never heard of man,
 " Or earth, the bedlam of the universe ! 1805
 " Where Reason (undiseas'd with you) runs mad,
 " And nurses Folly's children as her own,
 " Fond of the foulest. In the sacred mount
 " Of Holiness, where Reason is pronounc'd
 " Infallible, and thunders like a god ; 1810
 " E'en there, by saints the demons are outdone ;
 " What these think wrong our saints refine to right,
 " And kindly teach dull Hell her own black art ;
 " Satan, instructed, o'er their morals smiles.—
 " But this how strange to you who know not man ?
 " Has the least rumour of our race arriv'd ? 1816
 " Call'd here Elijah in his flaming car ?
 " Past by you the good Enoch, on his road
 " To those fair fields whence Lucifer was hurl'd ;
 " Who brush'd perhaps your sphere in his descent,
 " Stain'd your pure crystal ether, or let fall 1821
 " A short eclipse from his portentous shade ?
 " O that the fiend had lodg'd on some broad orb
 " Athwart his way, nor reach'd his present home,
 " Then blacken'd earth, with footsteps foul'd in hell,
 " Nor wash'd in ocean, as from Rome he past 1826
 " To Britain's isle, too, too conspicuous there."

But this is all digression. Where is he
 That o'er heaven's battlements the felon hurl'd
 To groans, and chains, and darkness ? where is he
 Who sees Creation's summit in a vale ? 1831
 He whom, while man is man, he can't but seek,
 And, if he finds, commences more than man ?
 O for a telescope his throne to reach !
 Tell me, ye learn'd on earth ! or bless'd above ! 1835
 Ye searching, ye Newtonian angels ! tell
 Where your Great Master's orb ? his planets where ?
 Those conscious satellites, those morning-stars,
 First-born of Deity ! from central love,
 By veneration most profound, thrown off ; 1840
 By sweet attraction no less strongly drawn ;
 Aw'd, and yet raptur'd ; raptur'd yet serene ;
 Past thought illustrious, but with borrow'd beams ;

In still approaching circles still remote,
 Revolving round the sun's eternal Sire? 1845
 Or sent, in lines direct, on embassies
 To nations—in what latitude?—beyond
 Terrestrial thought's horizon!—and on what
 High errands sent?—Here human effort ends,
 And leaves me still a stranger to his throne. 1850

Full well it might! I quite mistook my road;
 Born in an age more curious than devout,
 More fond to fix the place of heaven or hell,
 Than studious this to shun, or that secure.
 'Tis not the curious but the pious path 1855
 That leads me to my point. Lorenzo! know,
 Without or star or angel for their guide.
 Who worship God shall find him. Humble Love,
 And not proud Reason, keeps the door of heaven;
 Love finds admission where proud Science fails. 1860

Man's science is the culture of his heart,
 And not to lose his plummet in the depths
 Of Nature, or the more profound of God:
 Either to know, is an attempt that sets
 The wisest on a level with the fool. 1865
 To fathom nature (ill attempted here!)
 Past doubt is deep philosophy above;
 Higher degrees in bliss archangels take,
 As deeper learn'd; the deepest learning still,
 For what a thunder of omnipotence 1870
 (So might I dare to speak) is seen in all!
 In man! in earth! in more amazing skies!
 Teaching this lesson, pride is loth to learn—
 “Not deeply to discern, not much to know,
 “Mankind was born to wonder and adore.” 1875

And is there cause for higher wonder still,
 Than that which struck us from our past surveys?
 Yes; and for deeper adoration too.
 From my late airy travel unconfin'd,
 Have I learn'd nothing?—Yes, Lorenzo! this; 1880
 Each of these stars is a religious house;
 I saw their altars smoke, their incense rise;
 And heard Hosannas ring through ev'ry sphere,

A seminary fraught with future gods,
Nature all o'er is consecrated ground. 1885

Teeming with growths immortal and divine.
The great Proprietor's all-bounteous hand
Leaves nothing waste, but sows these fiery fields
With seeds of Reason, which to virtues rise
Beneath his genial ray; and, if escap'd 1890

The pestilential blasts of stubborn will,
When grown mature are gather'd for the skies.
And is devotion thought too much on earth,
When beings, so superior, homage boast,
And triumph in prostrations to the throne? 1895

But wherefore more of planets or of stars?
Ethereal journies, and, discover'd there,
Ten thousand worlds, ten thousand ways devout,
All Nature sending incense to the throne,
Except the bold Lorenzos of our sphere? 1900

Op'ning the solemn sources of my soul,
Since I have pour'd, like feign'd Eridanus,
My flowing numbers o'er the flaming skies,
Nor see of fancy or of fact what more
Invites the Muse—here turn we and review 1905

Our past nocturnal landscape wide—then say,
Say, then, Lorenzo! with what burst of heart
The whole, at once, revolving in his thought,
Must man exclaim, adoring, and aghast?

“O what a root! O what a branch, is here! 1910

“O what a Father! what a family?

“Worlds! systems! and creations!—and creations,

“In one agglomerated cluster, hung,

“Great Vine *! on thee, on thee the cluster hangs,

“The filial cluster! infinitely spread 1915

“In glowing globes, with various being fraught,

“And drinks (nectareous draught!) immortal life.

“Or, shall I say (for who can say enough?)

“A constellation of ten thousand gems, 1919

“And, O! of what dimension! of what weight!)

“Set in one signet, flames on the right hand

“Of Majesty Divine! the blazing seal,

* John XV. 1.

" That deeply stamps, on all created mind,
 " Indelible, his sovereign attributes,
 " Omnipotence and Love! that passing bound, 1925
 " And this surpassing that. Nor stop we here
 " For want of power in God, but thought in man.
 " E'en this acknowledg'd leaves us still in debt;
 " If greater aught, that greater all is thine,
 " Dread Sire!—Accept this miniature of thee, 1930
 " And pardon an attempt from mortal thought,
 " In which archangels might have fail'd unblam'd."

How such ideas of the Almighty's power,
 And such ideas of the Almighty's plan,
 (Ideas not absurd) distend the thought 1935
 Of feeble mortals! nor of them alone!
 The fulness of the Deity breaks forth
 In inconceivables to men and gods.
 Think then, O think, nor ever drop the thought,
 How low must man descend when gods adore! 1940
 Have I not then accomplish'd my proud boast?
 Did I not tell thee " We would mount * Lorenzo!
 " And kindle our devotion at the stars?"

And have I fail'd? and did I flatter thee?
 And art all adamant? and dost confute, 1945
 All urg'd with one irrefragable smile?
 Lorenzo! mirth how miserable here!
 Swear by the stars, by him who made them swear,
 Thy heart henceforth shall be as pure as they;
 Then thou, like them, shalt shine; like them shalt rise
 From low to lofty, from obscure to bright, 1951
 By due gradation, Nature's sacred law.
 The stars from whence?—Ask Chaos—he can tell.
 These bright temptations to idolatry
 From darkness and confusion took their birth; 1955
 Sons of Deformity! from fluid dregs
 Tartarean first they rose to masses rude,
 And then to spheres opaque; then dimly shone,
 Then brighten'd; then blaz'd out in perfect day.
 Nature delights in progress, in advance 1960
 From worse to better; but, when minds ascend,

Progress in part depends upon themselves.
 Heaven aids exertion. Greater makes the great ;
 The voluntary little lessens more.

O be a man ! and thou shalt be a god ! 1965
 And half self-made !—ambition how divine !

O thou, ambitious of disgrace alone ;
 Still undevout ? unkindled ?—tho' high taught,
 School'd by the skies, and pupil of the stars,
 Rank coward to the fashionable world ! 1970

Art thou ashamed to bend thy knee to heaven ?
 Curs'd fume of pride, exhal'd from deepest hell !
 Pride in religion is man's highest praise.
 Bent on destruction ! and in love with death !
 Not all these luminaries, quench'd at once, 1975
 Were half so sad as one benighted mind,

Which gropes for happiness, and meets despair.
 How, like a widow in her weeds, the Night,
 Amid her glimm'ring tapers, silent sits !
 How sorrowful, how desolate, she weeps 1980
 Perpetual dews, and saddens Nature's scene !
 A scene more sad sin makes the darken'd soul,
 All comfort kills, nor leaves one spark alive.

Tho' blind of heart, still open is thine eye.
 Why such magnificence in all thou seest ? 1985
 Of matter's grandeur, know one end is this,
 To tell the rational, who gazes on it,—

“ Tho' that immensely great, still greater he
 “ Whose breast, capacious, can embrace and lodge,
 “ Unburden'd, Nature's universal scheme ; 1990
 “ Can grasp creation with a single thought ;
 “ Creation grasp, and not exclude its Sire.”

To tell him farther—“ It behoves him much
 “ To guard th' important yet depending fate
 “ Of being, brighter than a thousand suns : 1995
 “ One single ray of thought outshines them all.”—

And if man hears obedient, soon he'll soar
 Superior heights, and on his purple wing,
 His purple wing bedropp'd with eyes of gold,
 Rising, where thought is now deny'd to raise, 2000
 Look down triumphant on these dazzling spheres.

Why then persist?—no mortal ever liv'd
 But, dying, he pronounc'd (when words are true)
 The whole that charms thee absolutely vain;
 Vain, and far worse!—Think thou with dying men;
 O condescend to think as angels think! 2006
 O tolerate a chance for happiness!
 Our nature such, ill choice ensures ill fate;
 And hell had been, tho' there had been no God.
 Dost thou not know, my new Astronomer! 2012
 Earth, turning from the sun, brings night to man?
 Man, turning from his God, brings endless night;
 Where thou canst read no morals, find no friend,
 Amend no manners, and expect no peace.
 How deep the darkness! and the groan how loud! 2015
 And far, how far, from lambent are the flames!—
 Such is Lorenzo's purchase! such his praise!
 The proud, the politic, Lorenzo's praise!
 Tho' in his ear, and levell'd at his heart,
 I've half read o'er the volume of the skies. 2020

For think not thou hast heard all this from me;
 My song but echoes what great Nature speaks.
 What has she spoken?—Thus the goddess spoke,
 Thus speaks for ever;—"Place, at Nature's head
 "A Sov'reign which o'er all things rolls his eye, 2025
 "Extends his wing, promulgates his commands,
 "But, above all, diffuses endless good,
 "To whom, for sure redress, the wrong'd may fly,
 "The vile for mercy, and the pain'd for peace;
 "By whom the various tenants of these spheres,
 "Diversify'd in fortunes, place, and powers 2031
 "Rais'd in enjoyment, as in worth they rise,
 "Arrive at length (if worthy such approach)
 "At that bleis'd fountain-head from which they
 "Where conflict past redoubles present joy, [stream,
 "And present joy looks forward on increase, 2036
 "And that on more; no period! ev'ry step
 "A double boon! a promise and a bliss."
 How easy fits this scheme on human hearts!
 It suits their make, it soothes their vast desires; 2040
 Passion is pleas'd, and Reason asks no more:

'Tis rational ! 'tis great !—but what is thine ?
 It darkens ! shocks ! excruciates ! and confounds !
 Leaves us quite naked, both of help and hope,
 Sinking from bad to worse ; few years the sport 2045
 Of Fortune, then the morsel of Despair.

Say, then, Lorenzo ! (for thou know'st it well)
 What vice ?—mere want of compass in our thought.
 Religion what ?—the proof of common-sense.
 How art thou hooted where the least prevails ! 2050
 Is it my fault if these truths call thee fool ?
 And thou shalt never be miscall'd by me.
 Can neither Shame nor Terror stand thy friend ?
 And art thou still an insect in the mire ?
 How like thy guardian angel have I flown, 2055
 Snatch'd thee from earth, escorted thee thro' all
 Th' ethereal armies, walk'd thee, like a god,
 Thro' splendours of first magnitude, arrang'd
 On either hand ; clouds thrown beneath thy feet ;
 Close-cruiz'd on the bright paradise of God, 2060
 And almost introduc'd thee to the throne !
 And art thou still carousing, for delight,
 Rank poison ? first fermenting to mere froth,
 And then subsiding into final gall ?
 To beings of sublime, immortal make, 2065
 How shocking is all joy whose end is sure !
 Such joy more shocking still, the more it charms !
 And dost thou chuse what ends ere well begun,
 And infamous as short ? and dost thou chuse
 (Thou to whose palate glory is so sweet) 2070
 To wade into perdition thro' contempt,
 Not of poor bigots only, but thy own ?
 For I have peep'd into thy cover'd heart,
 And seen it blush beneath a boastful brow ;
 For by strong Guilt's most violent assault, 2075
 Conscience is but disabled, not destroy'd.

O thou most awful being ! and most vain !
 Thy will how frail ! how glorious is thy power,
 Tho' dread Eternity has sown her seeds
 Of bliss and woe in thy despotic breast ; 2080
 Tho' heaven and hell depend upon thy choice,

A butterfly comes crows, and both are fled.
 Is this the picture of a rational?
 This horrid image, shall it be most just?
 Lorenzo! no; it cannot—shall not be, 2085
 If there is force in reason, or in sounds
 Chanted beneath the glimpses of the moon,
 A magic, at this planetary hour,
 When slumber locks the gen'ral lip, and dreams,
 Thro' senseless mazes, hunt souls uninspir'd. 2090
 Attend—the sacred mysteries begin——
 My solemn nightborn adjuration hear;
 Hear, and I'll raise thy spirit from the dust,
 While the stars gaze on this enchantment new;
 Enchantment not infernal, but divine! 2095

“ By Silence, Death's peculiar attribute;
 “ By Darkness, Guilt's inevitable doom;
 “ By Darkness and by Silence, sisters dread!
 “ That draw the curtain round Night's ebon throne,
 “ And raise ideas solemn as the scene! 2100
 “ By Night, and all of awful Night presents
 “ To thought or sense (of awful much to both,
 “ The goddess brings!) By these her trembling fires
 “ Like Vesta's, ever-burning, and, like her's,
 “ Sacred to thoughts immaculate and pure! 2105
 “ By these bright orators that prove and praise,
 “ And press thee to revere the Deity,
 “ Perhaps, too, aid thee, when rever'd, awhile,
 “ To reach his throne, as stages of the soul
 “ Thro' which, at different periods, she shall pass, 2110
 “ Refining gradual, for her final height,
 “ And purging off some dross at ev'ry sphere!
 “ By this dark pall thrown o'er the silent world!
 “ By the world's kings and kingdoms most renown'd,
 “ From short Ambition's zenith set for ever, 2115
 “ Sad presage to vain boasters, now in bloom!
 “ By the long list of sweet mortality,
 “ From Adam downward to this ev'ning knell,
 “ Which midnight waves in fancies startled eye, 2119
 “ And shocks her with an hundred centuries. [thought!
 “ Round Death's black banner throng'd, in human

“ By thousands, now, resigning their last breath,
 “ And calling thee—wert thou so wise to hear!
 “ By tombs o’er tombs arising, human earth
 “ Ejected, to make room for—human earth, 2125
 “ The monarch’s terror! and the sexton’s trade!
 “ By pompous obsequies that shun the day,
 “ The torch funereal, and the nodding plume,
 “ Which makes poor man’s humiliation proud,
 “ Boast of our ruin! triumph of our dust! 2130
 “ By the damp vault that weeps o’er royal bones,
 “ And the pale lamp that shews the ghastly dead,
 “ More ghastly thro’ the thick incumbent gloom!
 “ By visits (if there are) from darker scenes,
 “ The gliding spectre! and the groaning grave! 2135
 “ By groans, and graves, and miseries that groan
 “ For the grave’s shelter! By desponding men,
 “ Senseless to pains of death from pangs of guilt!
 “ By Guilt’s last audit! By yon moon in blood,
 “ The rocking firmament, the falling stars, 2140
 “ And thunder’s last discharge, great Nature’s knell!
 “ By second Chaos, and eternal Night,”—
 Be wise—nor let Philander blame thy charm;
 But own not ill discharg’d my double debt,
 Love to the living, duty to the dead. 2145

For know I’m but executor; he left
 This moral legacy; I make it o’er
 By his command: Philander hear in me,
 And heaven in both.—If deaf to these, oh! hear
 Florello’s tender voice; his weal depends 2150
 On thy resolve; it trembles at thy choice:
 For his sake—love thyself: example strikes
 All human hearts; a bad example more,
 More still a father’s; that ensures his ruin.
 As parent of his being, wouldst thou prove 2155
 Th’ unnatural parent of his miseries,
 And make him curse the being which thou gav’st?
 Is this the blessing of so fond a father?
 If careless of Lorenzo, spare, oh! spare
 Florello’s father, and Philander’s friend! 2160
 Florello’s father ruin’d, ruins him;

And from Philander's friend the world expects
A conduct no dishonour to the dead.

Let passion do what nobler motive should ;

Let love and emulation rise in aid

2165

To reason, and persuade thee to be—blest'd.

This seems not a request to be deny'd ;

Yet (such the infatuation of mankind !)

'Tis the most hopeless man can make to man.

Shall I then rise in argument and warmth ?

2170

And urge Philander's posthumous advice,

From topics yet unbroach'd ?—

But, oh ! I faint ! my spirits fail !—nor strange !

So long on wing, and in no middle clime !

To which my great Creator's glory call'd ;

2175

And calls—but now in vain. Sleep's dewy wand

Has strok'd my drooping lips, and promises

My long arrear of rest : the downy god

(Wont to return with our returning peace)

Will pay ere long, and bless me with repose.

2180

Haste, haste, sweet stranger ! from the peasant's cot,

The ship-boy's hammock, or the soldier's straw,

Whence Sorrow never chas'd thee ; with thee bring

Not hideous visions, as of late, but draughts

Delicious of well-tasted, cordial rest,

2185

Man's rich restorative ; his balmy bath,

That supples, lubricates, and keeps in play

The various movements of this nice machine,

Which asks such frequent periods of repair.

When tir'd with vain rotations of the day

2190

Sleep winds us up for the succeeding dawn,

Fresh we spin on, till sickness clogs our wheels,

Or death quite breaks the spring, and motion ends :

When will it end with me ?

——“ Thou only know'st,

2195

“ Thou, whose broad eye the future and the past

“ Joins to the present, making one of three

“ To moral thought ! thou know'st, and thou alone,

“ All-knowing ! all unknown ! and yet well known !

“ Near, tho' remote ! and, tho' unfathom'd, felt !

“ And tho' invisible, for ever seen !

2201

- “ And seen in all ! the great and the minute :
 “ Each globe above, with its gigantic race,
 “ Each flow’r, each leaf, with its small people swarm’d,
 “ (Those puny vouchers of Omnipotence !) 2205
 “ To the first thought that asks ‘ From whence ? ’ declare
 “ Their common source : thou fountain, running o’er
 “ In rivers of communicated joy !
 “ Who gav’st us speech for far, far humbler themes !
 “ Say by what name shall I presume to call 2210
 “ Him I see burning in these countless suns,
 “ As Moses in the bush ? Illustrious Mind !
 “ The whole creation less, far less, to thee
 “ Than that to the creation’s ample round, 2214
 “ How shall I name thee ?—How my lab’ring soul
 “ Heaves underneath the thought, too big for birth !
 “ Great System of perfections ! mighty Cause
 “ Of causes mighty ! Cause uncaus’d ! sole root
 “ Of Nature, that luxuriant growth of God !
 “ First Father of effects ! that progeny 2220
 “ Of endless series, where the golden chains
 “ Last link admits a period who can tell ?
 “ Father of all that is or heard or hears !
 “ Father of all that is or seen or sees !
 “ Father of all that is, or shall arise ! 2225
 “ Father of this immeasurable mass
 “ Of matter multiform, or dense, or rare,
 “ Opaque or lucid, rapid or at rest,
 “ Minute, or passing bound ! in each extreme
 “ Of like amaze and mystery to man. 2230
 “ Father of these bright millions of the night !
 “ Of which the least full Godhead had proclaim’d,
 “ And thrown the gazer on his knee—Or, say,
 “ Is appellation higher still thy choice ?
 “ Father of matter’s temporary lords ! 2235
 “ Father of spirits ! nobler offspring ! sparks
 “ Of high paternal glory, rich endow’d
 “ With various measures, and with various modes
 “ Of instinct, reason, intuition ; beams
 “ More pale or bright from day divine, to break 2240
 “ The darker matter organiz’d (the ware

- " Of all created spirit) beams that rise
 " Each over other in superior light,
 " Till the last ripens into lustre strong,
 " Of next approach to Godhead. Father fond 2245
 " (Far fonder than e'er bore that name on earth)
 " Of intellectual beings ! beings blest'd
 " With pow'rs to please thee, not of passive ply
 " To laws they know not ; beings lodg'd in seats
 " Of well-adapted joys, in diff'rent domes 2250
 " Of this imperial palace for thy sons ;
 " Of this proud, populous, well-policy'd,
 " Tho' boundless habitation, plann'd by thee ;
 " Whose sev'ral clans their sev'ral climates suit,
 " And transposition doubtless would destroy. 2255
 " Or, oh ! indulge, immortal King ! indulge
 " A title less august, indeed, but more
 " Endearing ; ah ! how sweet in human ears !
 " Sweet in our ears, and triumph in our hearts !
 " Father of immortality to man ! 2260
 " A theme that lately * set my soul on fire—
 " And thou the next ! yet equal ! thou by whom
 " That blessing was convey'd, far more, was bought,
 " Ineffable the price, by whom all worlds 2264
 " Were made, and one redeem'd ! illustrious Light
 " From light illustrious ! thou, whose regal pow'r,
 " Finite in time, but infinite in space,
 " On more than adamantine basis fix'd,
 " O'er more, far more, than diadems and thrones
 " Inviolably reigns, the dread of gods ! 2270
 " And, oh ! the friend of man ! beneath whose foot,
 " And by the mandate of whose awful nod,
 " All regions, revolutions, fortunes, fates,
 " Of high, of low, of mind, and matter, roll
 " Thro' the short channels of expiring time, 2275
 " Or shoreless ocean of eternity,
 " Calm or tempestuous (as thy Spirit breathes)
 " In absolute subjection !—And, O thou !
 " The glorious Third ! distinct, not separate !
 " Beaming from both ! with both incorporate, 2280

* Nights the Sixth and Seventh.

- “ And (strange to tell !) incorporate with dust !
 “ By condescension, as thy glory great,
 “ Inshrin’d in man ! of human hearts, if pure,
 “ Divine inhabitant ! the tie divine
 “ Of heaven with distant earth ! by whom, I trust,
 “ (If not inspir’d) uncensur’d this address 2286
 “ To thee, to them—to whom ?—mysterious pow’r !
 “ Reveal’d—yet unreveal’d ! darkness in light !
 “ Number in unity ! our joy ! our dread !
 “ The triple bolt that lays all wrong in ruin ! 2290
 “ That animates all right, the triple sun !
 “ Sun of the soul ! her never-setting sun !
 “ Triune unutterable, unconceiv’d,
 “ Absconding, yet demonstrable. Great God !
 “ Greater than greatest ! better than the best ! 2295
 “ Kinder than kindest ! with soft Pity’s eye,
 “ Or (stronger still to speak it) with thine own,
 “ From thy bright home, from that high firmament
 “ Where thou, from all eternity hast dwelt ;
 “ Beyond archangels’ unassisted ken, 2300
 “ From far above what mortals highest call,
 “ From Elevation’s pinnacle, look down,
 “ Thro’—what ? confounding interval ! thro’ all,
 “ And more, than lab’ring Fancy can conceive ;
 “ Thro’ radiant ranks of essences unknown ; 2305
 “ Thro’ hierarchies from hierarchies detach’d
 “ Round various banners of Omnipotence,
 “ With endless change of rapturous duties fir’d ;
 “ Thro’ wond’rous beings’ interposing swarms,
 “ All clust’ring at the call, to dwell in thee ; 2310
 “ Thro’ this wide waste of worlds ! this vista vast,
 “ All fanded o’er with suns, suns turn’d to night
 “ Before thy feeblest beam—look down—down—
 “ On a poor breathing particle in dust, [down,
 “ Or, lower, an immortal in his crimes : 2315
 “ His crimes forgive ! forgive his virtues too !
 “ Those smaller faults, half-converts to the right :
 “ Nor let me close these eyes, which never more
 “ May see the sun (tho’ Night’s descending scale
 “ Now weighs up Morn) unpity’d and unblest’d !

- " In thy displeasure dwells eternal pain ; 2321
 " Pain, our aversion ; pain, which strikes me now ;
 " And, since all pain is terrible to man,
 " Tho' transient, terrible ; at thy good hour,
 " Gently, ah, gently, lay me in my bed, 2325
 " My clay-cold bed ! by nature, now, so near ;
 " By nature near, still nearer by disease !
 " Till then be this an emblem of my grave ;
 " Let it out-preach the preacher ; ev'ry night
 " Let it out-cry the boy at Philip's ear, 2330
 " That tongue of death ! that herald of the tomb !
 " And when (the shelter of thy wing implor'd)
 " My senses, sooth'd, shall sink in soft repose,
 " O sink this truth still deeper in my soul,
 " Suggested by my pillow, sign'd by Fate, 2335
 " First in Fate's volume, at the page of Man—
 " ' Man's sickly soul, tho' turn'd and toss'd for ever,
 " From side to side, can rest on nought but thee ;
 " Here in full trust, hereafter in full joy :'
 " On thee, the promis'd, sure, eternal down 2340
 " Of spirits, toil'd in travel thro' this vale :
 " Nor of that pillow shall my soul despond ;
 " For—Love almighty ! Love almighty ! (sing,
 " Exult, Creation !) Love almighty reigns !
 " That death of death ! that cordial of despair ! 2345
 " And loud Eternity's triumphant song !
 " Of whom no more :—for, O thou Patron-God !
 " Thou God and mortal ! thence more God to man !
 " Man's theme eternal ! man's eternal theme !
 " Thou canst not 'scape uninjur'd from our praise :
 " Uninjur'd from our praise can he escape 2351
 " Who, disembosom'd from the Father, bows
 " The heaven of heaven's to kiss the distant earth !
 " Breathes out in agonies a sinless soul !
 " Against the cross Death's iron sceptre breaks !
 " From famish'd Ruin plucks her human prey ! 2356
 " Throws wide the gates celestial to his foes !
 " Their gratitude for such a boundless debt,
 " Deputes their suff'ring brothers to receive !
 " And, if deep human guilt in payment fails, 2360

“As deeper guilt prohibits our despair !
 “Enjoins it, as our duty, to rejoice !
 “And (to close all) omnipotently kind,
 “Take his delights among the sons of men.*”

What words are these—and did they come from
 heaven ?

2365

And were they spoke to man ? to guilty man ?

What are all mysteries to love like this ?

The songs of angels, all the melodies

Of choral gods, are wafted in the sound ;

Heal and exhilarate the broken heart.

2370

Tho’ plung’d before, in horrors dark as night :

Rich prelibation of consummate joy !

Nor wait we dissolution to be blest’d.

This final effort of the moral Muse,

How justly *titled* † ! not for me alone ;

2375

For all that read. What spirit of support,

What heights of Consolation, crown my song !

Then farewell Night ! of darkness, now no more ;

Joy breaks, shines, triumphs : ’tis eternal day.

Shall that which rises out of nought complain

2380

Of a few evils, paid with endless joys ?

My Soul ! henceforth, in sweetest union join

The two supports of human happiness,

Which some, erroneous, think can never meet,

True taste of life, and constant thought of death !

The thought of death, sole victor of its dread !

2386

Hope be thy joy, and probity thy skill ;

Thy patron he whose diadem has dropp’d

Yon gems of heaven, eternity thy prize ;

And leave the racers of the world their own,

2390

Their feather and their froth, for endless toils :

They part with all for that which is not bread ;

They mortify, they starve, on wealth, fame, pow’r,

And laugh to scorn the fools that aim at more.

How must a spirit, late escap’d from earth,

2395

Suppose Philander’s, Lucia’s, or Narcissa’s,

The truth of things new-blazing in its eye,

Look back, astonish’d on the ways of men,

* Prov. chap. viii.

† The Consolation.

Whose lives' whole drift is to forget their graves!
And when our present privilege is past, 2400
To scourge us with due sense of its abuse,
The same astonishment will seize us all.

What then must pain us would preserve us now.
Lorenzo! 'tis not yet too late. Lorenzo!
Seize wisdom, ere 'tis torment to be wise; 2405
That is, seize Wisdom ere she seizes thee.
For what, my small Philosopher! is hell?
'Tis nothing but full knowledge of the truth,
When Truth, resisted long, is sworn our foe,
And calls eternity to do her right. 2410

Thus darkness aiding intellectual light,
And sacred Silence whispering truths divine,
And truths divine converting pain to peace,
My song the midnight raven has outwing'd,
And shot, ambitious of unbounded scenes, 2415
Beyond the flaming limits of the world
Her gloomy flight. But what avails the flight
Of fancy, when our hearts remain below?
Virtue abounds in flatterers and foes;
'Tis pride to praise her, penance to perform. 2420
To more than words, to more than worth of tongue,
Lorenzo! rise, at this auspicious hour,
An hour when heaven's most intimate with man;
When, like a falling star, the ray divine
Glides swift into the bosom of the just; 2425
And just are all determin'd to reclaim,
Which sets that title high within thy reach.
Awake then; thy Philander calls: awake!
Thou, who shalt wake when the Creation sleeps;
When, like a taper, all these suns expire; 2430
When Time, like him of Gaza in his wrath,
Plucking the pillars that support the world,
In Nature's ample ruins lies entomb'd,
And midnight, universal midnight! reigns. 2434

THE FORCE OF RELIGION;
OR, VANQUISHED LOVE.

A POEM.

IN TWO BOOKS.

Gratior et pulchro veniens in corpore virtus. Virg.

BOOK I.

-----*Ad cælum ardentia lumina tollens,
Lumina; nam teneras arcebant vincula palmas. Virg.*

FROM lofty themes, from thoughts that soar'd on
high,
And open'd wond'rous scenes above the sky,
My muse! descend: indulge my fond desire:
With softer thoughts my melting soul inspire,
And smooth my numbers to a female's praise: 5
A partial world will listen to my lays,
While Anna reigns, and sets a female name
Unrivall'd in the glorious lists of Fame.

Hear, ye fair daughters of this happy land!
Whose radiant eyes the vanquish'd world command, 10
Virtue is beauty: but when charms of mind
With elegance of outward form are join'd;
When youth makes such bright objects still more bright,
And Fortune sets them in the strongest light,
'Tis all of heaven that we below may view, 15
And all but adoration is your due.

Fam'd female virtue did this isle adorn
Ere Ormond, or her glorious queen, was born;
When now Maria's powerful arms prevail'd,
And haughty Dudley's bold ambition fail'd, 20
The beauteous daughter of great Suffolk's race,
In blooming youth, adorn'd with ev'ry grace,
Who gain'd a crown by treason not her own,
And innocently fill'd another's throne,
Hurl'd from the summit of imperial state, 25
With equal mind sustain'd the stroke of fate.

But how will Guilford, her far dearer part,
With manly reason fortify his heart?
At once she longs, and is afraid to know;
Now swift she moves, and now advances slow, 30

To find her lord, and, finding, passes by,
 Silent with fear, nor dares she meet his eye,
 Lest that, unask'd, in speechless grief disclose
 The mournful secret of his inward woes.

Thus, after sickness, doubtful of her face,
 The melancholy virgin shuns the glass. 35

At length, with troubled thought, but look serene,
 And sorrow soften'd by her heavenly mien,
 She clasps her lord, brave, beautiful, and young,
 While tender accents melt upon her tongue; 40
 Gentle and sweet, as vernal zephyr blows,
 Fanning the lily, or the blooming rose.

" Grieve not, my lord ; a crown, indeed, is lost ;
 " What far outshines a crown we still may boast ;
 " A mind compos'd, a mind that can disdain 45
 " A fruitless sorrow for a loss so vain.
 " Nothing is loss that virtue can improve
 " To wealth eternal, and return above ;
 " Above where no distinction shall be known
 " 'Twixt him whom storms have shaken from a throne,
 " And him who, basking in the smiles of Fate, 55
 " Shone forth in all the splendor of the great :
 " Nor can I find the diff'rence here below ;
 " I lately was a queen ; I still am so,
 " While Guilford's wife, thee rather I obey, 55
 " Than o'er mankind extend imperial sway.
 " When we lie down on some obscure retreat,
 " Incens'd Maria may her rage forget ;
 " And I to death my duty will improve,
 " And what you miss in empire add in love. 60
 " Your godlike soul is open'd in your look,
 " And I have faintly your great meaning spoke.
 " For this alone I'm pleas'd I wore the crown,
 " To find with what content we lay it down.
 " Heroes may win, but 'tis a heavenly race 65
 " Can quit a throne with a becoming grace."

Thus spoke the fairest of her sex, and cheer'd
 Her drooping lord, whose boding bosom fear'd
 A darker cloud of ills would burst, and shed
 Severer vengeance on her guiltless head. 70

Too just, alas, the terrors which he felt !
For, lo ! a guard !—forgive him if he melt—
How sharp her pangs, when sever'd from his side,
The most sincerely lov'd, and loving bride
In space confin'd, the muse forbears to tell ; 75
Deep was her anguish, but she bore it well :
His pain was equal, but his virtue less ;
He thought in grief there could be no excess.
Pensive he sat, o'ercast with gloomy care,
And often fondly clasp'd his absent fair ; 80
Now, silent, wander'd through his rooms of state,
And sicken'd at their pomp, and tax'd his fate,
Which thus adorn'd, in all her shining store,
A splendid wretch, magnificently poor.
Now on the bridal-bed his eyes were cast, 85
And anguish fed on his enjoyments past ;
Each recollected pleasure made him smart,
And ev'ry transport stabb'd him to the heart.

That happy moon which summon'd to delight,
That moon which shone on his dear nuptial night, 90
Which saw him fold her yet untasted charms
(Deny'd to princes) in his longing arms,
Now sees the transient blessing fleet away,
Empire and love ! the vision of a day.

Thus, in the British clime, a summer-storm 95
Will oft' the smiling face of heaven deform ;
The winds with violence at once descend,
Sweep flowers and fruits, and make the forest bend ;
A sudden winter, while the sun is near,
O'ercomes the season, and inverts the year. 100

But whither is the captive borne away,
The beauteous captive ! from the cheerful day ?
The scene is chang'd indeed ; before her eyes
Ill-boding looks and unknown horrors rise :
For pomp and splendor, for her guard and crown, 105
A gloomy dungeon, and a keeper's frown ;
Black thoughts each morn invade the lover's breast ;
Each night a ruffian locks the queen to rest.

Ah, mournful change, if judg'd by vulgar minds !
But Suffolk's daughter its advantage finds. 110

Religion's force divine is best display'd
In deep desertion of all human aid :

To succour in extremes is her delight,
And cheer the heart when terror strikes the fight.

We, disbelieving our own senses, gaze, 115

And wonder what a mortal's heart can raise

To triumph o'er misfortunes, smile in grief,

And comfort those who come to bring relief :

We gaze, and, as we gaze, wealth, fame, decay,

And all the world's vain glories fade away. 120

Against her cares she rais'd a dauntless mind,

And with an ardent heart, but most resign'd,

Deep in the dreadful gloom, with pious heat,

Amid the silence of her dark retreat,

Address'd her God—"Almighty Power Divine!

" 'Tis thine to raise, and to depress is thine; 126

" With honour to light up the name unknown,

" Or to put out the lustre of a throne.

" In my short span both fortunes I have prov'd,

" And though with ill frail nature will be mov'd, 130

" I'll bear it well: (O strengthen me to bear!)

" And if my piety may claim thy care,

" If I remember'd, in youth's giddy heat,

" And tumult of a court, a future state,

" O favour, when thy mercy I implore, 135

" For one who never guilty sceptre bore!

" 'Twas I receiv'd the crown; my lord is free;

" If it must fall, let vengeance fall on me:

" Let him survive, his country's name to raise,

" And in a guilty land to speak thy praise! 140

" O may th' indulgence of a father's love,

" Pour'd forth on me, be doubled from above!

" If these are safe, I'll think my prayers succeed,

" And bless thy tender mercies whilst I bleed."

'Twas now the mournful eve before that day 145

In which the queen to her full wrath gave way;

Through rigid justice rush'd into offence,

And drank, in zeal, the blood of innocence.

The sun went down in clouds, and seem'd to mourn

The sad necessity of his return; 150

The hollow wind, and melancholy rain,
Or did, or was imagin'd to complain :
The tapers cast an inauspicious light ;
Stars there were none, and doubly dark the night.

Sweet Innocence in chains can take her rest ; 155
Soft slumber gently creeping through her breast,
She sinks ; and in her sleep is re-enthron'd,
Mock'd by a gaudy dream, and vainly crown'd.
She views her fleets and armies, seas and land,
And stretches wide her shadow of command : 160
With royal purple is her vision hung ;
By phantom hosts are shouts of conquest rung ;
Low at her feet the suppliant rival lies ;
Our pris'ner mourns her fate, and bids her rise.

Now level beams upon the waters play'd, 165
Glanc'd on the hills, and westward cast the shade ;
The busy trades in city had began
To sound, and speak the painful life of man.
In tyrant's breasts the thoughts of vengeance rouse,
And the fond bridegroom turns him to his spouse. 170
At this first birth of light, while morning breaks,
Our spouseless bride, our widow'd wife, awakes ;
Awakes, and smiles ; nor night's imposture blames ;
Her real pomps were little more than dreams ;
A short-liv'd blaze, a light'ning quickly o'er, 175
That dy'd in birth, that shone and was no more ;
She turns her side and soon resumes a state
Of mind well suited to her alter'd fate,
Serene, though serious, when dread tidings come
(Ah wretched Guilford !) of her instant doom. 180
Sun ! hide thy beams ; in clouds as black as night
Thy face involve ; be guiltless of the sight ;
Or haste more swiftly to the western main,
Nor let her blood the conscious daylight stain !

Oh ! how severe ! to fall so new a bride, 185
Yet blushing from the priest, in youthful pride ;
When Time had just matur'd each perfect grace,
And open'd all the wonders of her face !
To leave her Guilford dead to all relief,
Fond of his woe, and obstinate in grief. 190

Unhappy fair ! whatever Fancy drew,
 (Vain promis'd blessings) vanish from her view ;
 No train of cheerful days, endearing nights,
 No sweet domestic joys, and chaste delights ;
 Pleasures that blossom ev'n from doubts and fears, 195
 And bliss and rapture rising out of cares :
 No little Guilford, with paternal grace,
 Lull'd on her knee, or smiling in her face ;
 Who, when her dearest father shall return,
 From pouring tears on her untimely urn, 200
 Might comfort to his silver hairs impart,
 And fill her place in his indulgent heart ;
 As where fruits fall, quick-rising blossoms smile,
 And the blest'd Indian of his cares beguile.

In vain these various reasons jointly press 205
 To blacken death, and heighten her distress ;
 She, through th' encircling terrors darts her sight
 To the blest'd regions of eternal light,
 And fills her soul with peace : to weeping friends
 Her father and her lord she recommends, 210
 Unmov'd herself : her foes her air survey,
 And rage to see their malice thrown away.
 She soars ; now nought on earth detains her care—
 But Guilford, who still struggles for his share.
 Still will his form importunately rise, 215
 Clog and retard her transport to the skies.
 As trembling flames now take a feeble flight,
 Now catch the brand with a returning light,
 Thus her soul onward, from the seats above
 Falls fondly back, and kindles into love. 220

At length she conquers in the doubtful field ;
 That heaven she seeks will be her Guilford's shield.
 Now death is welcome : his approach is slow ;
 'Tis tedious longer to expect the blow.

Oh, mortals ! short of sight, who think the past
 O'erblown misfortune still shall prove the last : 226
 Alas ! misfortunes travel in a train,
 And oft' in life form one perpetual chain :
 Fear buries fear, and ills on ills attend,
 Till life and sorrow meet one common end. 230

She thinks that she has nought but death to fear,
And death is conquer'd. Worse than death is near:
Her rigid trials are not yet complete;
The news arrives of her great father's fate.
She sees his hoary head, all white with age, 235
A victim to th' offended monarch's rage.
How great the mercy, had she breath'd her last
Ere the dire sentence on her father past!

A fonder parent Nature never knew,
And, as his age increas'd, his fondness grew. 240
A parent's love ne'er better was bestow'd;
The pious daughter in her heart o'erflow'd.
And can she from all weakness still refrain?
And still the firmness of her soul maintain?
Impossible! a sigh will force its way, 245
One patient tear her mortal birth betray;
She sighs and weeps! but so she weeps and sighs,
As silent dew descends, and vapours rise.

Celestial Patience! how dost thou defeat
The foe's proud menace, and elude his hate? 250
While Passion takes his part, betrays our peace,
To death and torture swells each slight disgrace;
By not opposing, thou dost ills destroy,
And wear thy conquer'd sorrows into joy.

Now she revolves within her anxious mind 255
What woe still lingers in reserve behind.
Griefs rise on griefs, and she can see no bound,
While nature lasts, and can receive a wound.
The sword is drawn; the Queen to rage inclin'd,
By mercy nor by piety confin'd, 260
What mercy can the zealot's heart assuage,
Whose piety itself converts to rage?
She thought, and sigh'd: and now the blood began
To leave her beauteous cheek all cold and wan:
New sorrow dimm'd the lustre of her eye, 265
And on her cheek the fading roses die.

Alas! should Guilford too—When now she's brought
To that dire view, that precipice of thought,
While there she trembling stands, nor dares look down
Nor can recede, 'till Heaven's decrees are known. 270

Cure of all ills, till now her lord appears—
 But not to cheer her heart, and dry her tears !
 Not now, as usual, like the rising day,
 To chase the shadows and the damps away ;
 But, like a gloomy storm, at once to sweep 275
 And plunge her to the bottom of the deep.
 Black were his robes, dejected was his air,
 His voice was frozen by his cold despair ;
 Slow like a ghost, he mov'd with solemn pace ;
 A dying paleness sat upon his face. 280
 Back she recoil'd, she smote her lovely breast,
 Her eyes the anguish of her heart confess ;
 Struck to the soul, she stagger'd with the wound,
 And sunk, a breathless image, to the ground.
 Thus the fair lily, when the sky's o'ercast, 285
 At first but shudders in the feeble blast ;
 But when the winds and weighty rains descend,
 The fair and upright stem is forc'd to bend,
 Till broke, at length, its snowy leaves are shed,
 And strew with dying sweets their native bed. 290

THE FORCE OF RELIGION :
 OR, VANQUISHED LOVE.

BOOK II.

Hic pietatis honos ? sic nos in sceptris reponis ?

Virg.

HER Guilford clasps her, beautiful in death,
 And with a kiss recalls her fleeting breath.
 To tapers thus, which by a blast expire,
 A lighted taper, touch'd, restores the fire :
 She rear'd her swimming eye, and saw the light, 5
 And Guilford, too, or she had loath'd the sight.
 Her father's death she bore, despis'd her own,
 But now she must, she will, have leave to groan.
 " Ah ! Guilford ! " she began, and would have spoke,
 But sobs rush'd in, and ev'ry accent broke : 10
 Reason itself, as gusts of passion blew,
 Was ruffled in the tempest, and withdrew.

So the youth lost his image in the well,
 When tears upon the yielding surface fell;
 The scatter'd features slid into decay, 15
 And spreading circles drove his face away.

To touch the soft affections, and control
 The manly temper of the bravest soul,
 What with afflicted beauty can compare,
 And drops of love distilling from the fair? 20
 It melts us down: our pains delight bestow,
 And we with fondness languish o'er our woe.

This Guilford prov'd: and, with excess of pain,
 And pleasure too, did to his bosom strain
 The weeping fair: sunk deep in soft desire, 25
 Indulg'd his love, and nurs'd the raging fire:
 Then tore himself away, and, standing wide,
 As fearing a relapse of fondness, cry'd,
 With ill dissembled grief, "My Life! forbear;
 "You wound your Guilford with each cruel tear:
 "Did you not chide my grief? repress your own, 31
 "Nor want compassion for yourself alone.
 "Have you beheld how, from the distant main,
 "The thronging waves roll on, a num'rous train,
 "And foam, and bellow, till they reach the shore, 35
 "There burst their noisy pride, and are no more?
 "Thus the successive flows of human race,
 "Chas'd by the coming, the preceding chase;
 "They found and swell, their haughty heads they rear,
 "Then fall, and flatten, break, and disappear. 40
 "Life is a forfeit we must shortly pay,
 "And where's the mighty lucre of a day?
 "Why should you mourn my fate? 'tis most unkind;
 "Your own you bore with an unshaken mind:
 "And which, can you imagine, was the dart 45
 "That drank most blood, sunk deepest in my heart?
 "I cannot live without you; and my doom
 "I meet with joy, to share one common tomb.—
 "And are again your tears profusely spilt?
 "Oh! then, my kindness blackens to my guilt; 50
 "It foils itself if it recal your pain:—
 "Life of my life! I beg you to refrain:

“ The load which Fate imposes you increase,
 “ And help Maria to destroy my peace.”

But, oh ! against himself his labour turn'd ; 55
 The more he comforted, the more she mourn'd.
 Compassion swells our grief ; words soft and kind
 But sooth our weakness, and dissolve the mind.
 Her sorrow flow'd in streams ; nor her's alone ;
 While that he blam'd, he yielded to his own. 60
 Where are the smiles she wore, when she so late,
 Hail'd him great partner of the regal state ;
 When orient gems around her temples blaz'd,
 And bending nations on the glory gaz'd ?

'Tis now the Queen's command they both retreat,
 To weep with dignity, and mourn in state : 66
 She forms the decent misery with joy,
 And loads with pomp the wretch she would destroy.
 A spacious hall is hung with black, all light
 Shut out, and noon-day darken'd into night : 70
 From the mid roof a lamp depends on high,
 Like a dim crescent in a clouded sky ;
 It sheds a quiv'ring melancholy gloom,
 Which only shews the darkness of the room :
 A shining axe is on the table laid, 75
 A dreadful sight ! and glitters thro' the shade.

In this sad scene the lovers are confin'd,
 A scene of terrors to a guilty mind !
 A scene that would have damp'd with rising cares,
 And quite extinguish'd ev'ry love but theirs. 80
 What can they do ? they fix their mournful eyes—
 Then Guilford thus abruptly ; “ I despise
 “ An empire lost ; I fling away the crown ;
 “ Numbers have laid that bright delusion down ; 85
 “ But where's the Charles, or Dioclesian where,
 “ Could quit the blooming, wedded, weeping fair ?
 “ Oh ! to dwell ever on thy lip ! to stand
 “ In full possession of thy snowy hand !
 “ And, thro' th' unclouded crystal of thine eye,
 “ The heavenly treasures of thy mind to spy ! 90
 “ Till rapture reason happily destroys,
 “ And my soul wanders thro' immortal joys !

“ Give me the world, and ask me where’s my bliss ?

“ I clasp thee to my breast, and answer, This.

“ And shall the grave”—He groans, and can no more,
But all her charms in silence traces o’er ; 96

Her lip, her cheek, and eye, to wonder wrought,
And, wond’ring, sees, in sad presaging thought,
From that fair neck, that world of beauty, fall,
And roll along the dust, a ghastly ball ! 100

Oh ! let those tremble who are greatly bless’d !
For who but Guilford could be thus distress’d ?

Come hither, all you happy ! all you great !

From flow’ry meadows, and from rooms of state ;

Nor think I call your pleasures to destroy, 105
But to refine, and to exalt, your joy :

Weep not ; but smiling, fix your ardent care
On nobler titles than the brave or fair.

Was ever such a mournful, moving, sight ?
See, if you can, by that dull, trembling, light : 110

Now they embrace ; and, mix’d with bitter woe,
Like Isis and her Thames, one stream they flow :

Now they start wide ; fix’d in benumbing care,
They stiffen into statues of despair :

Now, tenderly severe, and fiercely kind, 115

They rush at once ; they fling their cares behind,

And clasp, as if to death ; new vows repeat,

And quite wrapp’d up in love, forget their fate.

A short delusion ! for the raging pain

Returns, and their poor hearts must bleed again. 120

Mean-time the Queen new cruelty decreed ;

But ill content that they should only bleed,

A priest is sent, who, with insidious art,

Instils his poison into Suffolk’s heart ;

And Guilford drank it, hanging on the breast, 125

He from his childhood was with Rome possess’d.

When now the ministers of Death draw nigh,

And in her dearest lord she first must die,

The subtle priest, who long had watch’d to find

The most unguarded passes of her mind, 130

Bespoke her thus : “ Grieve not ; ’tis in your pow’r

“ Your lord to rescue from this fatal hour.”

Her bosom pants ; she draws her breath with pain ;
 A sudden horror thrills thro' ev'ry vein ;
 Life seems suspended, on his words intent, 135
 And her soul trembles for the great event.

The priest proceeds : " Embrace the faith of Rome,
 " And ward your own, your lord's, and father's, doom."
 Ye blessed Spirits ! now your charge sustain ;
 The past was ease ; now first she suffers pain, 140
 Must she pronounce her father's death ? must she
 Bid Guilford bleed ?—It must not, cannot, be.
 It cannot be ! but 'tis the Christian praise,
 Above impossibilities to raise

The weakness of our nature, and deride 145
 Of vain philosophy the boasted pride.
 What tho' our feeble sinews scarce impart
 A moment's swiftness to the feather'd dart ;
 Tho' tainted air our vig'rous youth can break,
 And a chill blast the hardy warrior shake ? 150

Yet are we strong : hear the loud tempest roar
 From east to west, and call us weak no more :
 The lightning's unresisted force proclaims
 Our might ; and thunders raise our humble names ;
 'Tis our Jehovah fills the heavens ; as long 155
 As he shall reign Almighty, we are strong :
 We, by devotion, borrow from his throne ;
 And almost make Omnipotence our own :
 We force the gates of heaven, by fervent prayer ;
 And call forth triumph out of man's despair. 160

Our lovely mourner, kneeling, lifts her eyes
 And bleeding heart, in silence, to the skies,
 Devoutly sad—Then, brightening, like the day,
 When sudden winds sweep scatter'd clouds away,
 Shining in majesty, till now unknown ; 165
 And breathing life and spirit scarce her own ;
 She, rising, speaks : " If these the terms——?"

Here Guilford, cruel Guilford, (barbarous man !
 Is this thy love ?) as swift as lightning ran ;
 O'erwhelm'd her with tempestuous sorrow fraught, 170
 And stifled, in its birth, the mighty thought ;

Then bursting fresh into a flood of tears,
 Fierce, resolute, delirious with his fears;
 His fears for her alone: he beat his breast,
 And thus the fervour of his soul exprest: 175
 " Oh! let thy thought o'er our past converse rove,
 " And shew one moment uninflam'd with love!
 " Oh! if thy kindness can no longer last,
 " In pity to thyself, forget the past!
 " Else wilt thou never, void of shame and fear, 180
 " Pronounce his doom whom thou hast held so dear:
 " Thou, who hast took me to thy arms, and swore
 " Empires were vile, and Fate could give no more;
 " That to continue was its utmost power,
 " And make the future like the present hour: 185
 " Now call a ruffian, bid his cruel sword
 " Lay wide the bosom of thy worthless lord?
 " Transfix his heart (since you its love disclaim)
 " And stain his honour with a traitor's name.
 " This might perhaps be borne without remorse, 190
 " But sure a father's pangs will have their force!
 " Shall his good age, so near its journey's end,
 " Through cruel torment to the grave descend?
 " His shallow blood all issue at a wound,
 " Wash a slave's feet, and smoke upon the ground?
 " But he to you has ever been severe; 196
 " Then take your vengeance."—Suffolk now drew near,
 Bending beneath the burden of his care,
 His robes neglected, and his head was bare:
 Decrepit Winter, in the yearly ring, 200
 Thus slowly creeps to meet the blooming spring:
 Downward he cast a melancholy look,
 Thrice turn'd to hide his grief, then faintly spoke.
 " Now deep in years, and forward in decay,
 " That axe can only rob me of a day: 205
 " For thee, my soul's desire! I can't refrain;
 " And shall my tears, my last tears, flow in vain?
 " When you shall know a mother's tender name,
 " My heart's distress no longer will you blame."
 At this, afar his bursting groans were heard; 210
 The tears ran trickling down his silver beard:

He snatch'd her hand, which to his lips he press'd,
 And bid her plant a dagger in his breast;
 Then, sinking, call'd her piety unjust,
 And soil'd his hoary temples in the dust.

215

Hard-hearted men! will you no mercy know?
 Has the queen brib'd you to distress her foe?
 O weak deserters to Misfortune's part,
 By false affection thus to pierce her heart!

When she had soar'd, to let your arrows fly,
 And fetch her bleeding from the middle sky.

220

And can her virtue, springing from the ground,
 Her flight recover, and disdain the wound,
 When cleaving love, and human int'rest, bind
 The broken force of her aspiring mind!

225

As round the gen'rous eagle, which in vain
 Exerts her strength, the serpent wreaths his train,
 Her struggling wings entangles, curling plies
 His pois'nous tail, and stings her as she flies.

While yet the blow's first dreadful weight she feels,
 And with its force her resolution reels,
 Large doors, unfolding with a mournful sound,
 To view discover, weltring on the ground,
 Three headless trunks of those whose arms maintain'd,
 And in her wars immortal glory gain'd:

231

235

The lifted axe assur'd her ready doom,
 And silent mourners sadden'd all the room,
 Shall I proceed, or here break off my tale,
 Nor truths to stagger human faith reveal?

She met this utmost malice of her fate

240

With Christian dignity and pious state;
 The beating storm's propitious rage she bless'd,
 And all the martyr triumph'd in her breast.

Her lord and father, for a moment's space,
 She strictly folded in her soft embrace!

245

Then thus she spoke, while angels heard on high,
 And sudden gladness smil'd along the sky.

"Your over-fondness has not mov'd my hate:

"I am well pleas'd you make my death so great:

"I joy I cannot save you; and have giv'n

250

"Two lives much dearer than my own to heaven,

“ If so the queen decrees*.—But I have cause
 “ To hope my blood will satisfy the laws ;
 “ And there is mercy still for you in store :
 “ With me the bitterness of death is o’er ; 255
 “ He shot his sting in that farewell embrace,
 “ And all that is to come is joy and peace.
 “ Then let mistaken sorrow be suppress’d,
 “ Nor seem to envy my approaching rest.”
 Then, turning to the ministers of fate, 260
 She, smiling, says, “ My victory’s complete ;
 “ And tell your queen I thank her for the blow,
 “ And grieve my gratitude I cannot show.
 “ A poor return I leave in England’s crown,
 “ For everlasting pleasure and renown : 265
 “ Her guilt alone allays this happy hour ;
 “ Her guilt, the only vengeance in her power.”
 Not Rome, untouch’d with sorrow, heard her fate,
 And fierce Maria pity’d her too late. 269

* Here she embraces them.



ON THE
DEATH OF QUEEN ANNE,
AND THE
ACCESSION OF KING GEORGE.

INSCRIBED TO

JOSEPH ADDISON, ESQ.

Secretary to their Excellencies the Lords Justices.

-----Gaudia curis.

Hor.

SIR! I have long, and with impatience, fought
To ease the fullness of my grateful thought,
My fame at once and duty to pursue,
And please the public by respect to you.

Tho' you, long since beyond Britannia known, 5
Have spread your country's glory with your own,
To me you never did more lovely shine,
Than when so late the kindled wrath divine
Quench'd our ambition in great Anna's fate,
And darken'd all the pomp of human state. 10
Though you are rich in fame, and fame decay,
Though rais'd in life, and greatness fade away,
Your lustre brightens; virtue cuts the gloom
With purer rays, and sparkles near a tomb.

Know, Sir! the great esteem and honour due 15
I chose, that moment, to profess to you,
When sadness reign'd, when Fortune so severe
Had warm'd our bosoms to be most sincere,
And when no motive could have force to raise
A serious value, and provoke my praise, 20
But such as rise above, and far transcend,
Whatever glories with this world shall end,
Then shining forth, when deepest shades shall blot
The sun's bright orb, and Cato be forgot.

I sing!—but, ah! my theme I need not tell! 25
See ev'ry eye with conscious sorrow swell:
Who now to verse would raise his humble voice,
Can only shew his duty, not his choice.

ON THE DEATH OF QUEEN ANNE. 285

How great the weight of grief our hearts sustain!
We languish, and to speak is to complain. 30

Let us look back, (for who too oft can view
That most illustrious scene, for ever new!)
See all the season's shine on Anna's throne,
And pay a constant tribute not their own.
Her summer's heats nor fruits alone bestow, 35
They reap the harvests and subdue the foe;
And when black storms confess the distant fun,
Her winters wear the wreaths her summers won:
Revolving pleasures in their turns appear,
And triumphs are the product of the year. 40
To crown the whole, great joys in greater cease,
And glorious victory is lost in peace.

Whence this profusion on our favour'd isle!
Did partial Fortune on our virtue smile?
Or did the sceptre, in great Anna's hand. 45
Stretch forth this rich indulgence o'er our land?
Ungrateful Britain! quit thy groundless claim;
The queen and thy good fortune are the same.

Hear, with alarms our trumpets fill the sky;
'Tis Anna reigns; the Gallic squadrons fly. 50
We spread our canvass to the southern shore;
'Tis Anna reigns! the South resigns her store.
Her virtue sooths the tumult of the main,
And swells the field with mountains of the slain;
Argyle and Churchill but the glory share, 55
While millions lie subdu'd by Anna's prayer.

How great her zeal! how fervent her desire!
How did her soul in holy warmth expire!
Constant devotion did her time divide,
Nor set returns of pleasure or of pride; 60
Not want of rest, or the sun's parting ray,
But finish'd duty, limited the day.

How sweet succeeding sleep! what lovely themes
Smil'd in her thoughts, and soften'd all her dreams!
Her royal couch descending angels spread, 65
And join their wings, a shelter o'er her head.

Tho' Europe's wealth and glory claim'd a part,
Religion's cause reign'd mistress of her heart;

She saw, and griev'd, to see the mean estate
Of those who round the hallow'd altar wait ;
She shed her bounty piously profuse,
And thought it more her own in sacred use.

Thus on his furrow see the tiller stand,
And fill with genial seed his lavish hand ;
He trusts the kindness of the fruitful plain,
And providently scatters all his grain. 75

What strikes my sight ! does proud Augusta rise
New to behold, and awfully surprise !

Her lofty brow more num'rous turrets crown,
And sacred domes on palaces look down ; 80
A noble pride of piety is shewn,
And temples cast a lustre on the throne.

How would this work another's glory raise ;
But Anna's greatness robs her of the praise :
Drown'd in a greater blaze it disappears. 85

Who dry'd the widow's and the orphan's tears ?
Who stoop'd from high to succour the distress'd,
And reconcile the wounded heart to rest ?

Great in her goodness, well could we perceive,
Whoever fought, it was a Queen that gave. 90

Misfortune lost her name ; her guiltless frown
But made another debtor to the crown,
And each unfriendly stroke from fate we bore,
Became our title to the regal store.

Thus injur'd trees adopt a foreign shoot, 95
And their wounds blossom with a fairer fruit.

Ye Numbers, who on your misfortunes thriv'd,
When first the dreadful blast of Fame arriv'd,
Say, what a shock, what agonies you felt,
How did your souls with tender anguish melt ! 100

That grief which living Anna's love suppress'd,
Shook like a tempest ev'ry grateful breast.

A second fate our sinking fortunes try'd ;
A second time our tender parents dy'd !

Heroes returning from the field we crown, 105
And deify the haughty victor's frown ;
His splendid wealth too rashly we admire,
Catch the disease, and burn with equal fire.

Wifely to spend is the great art of gain ;
 And one reliev'd transcends a million slain. 110
 When time shall ask where once Ramillia lay,
 Or Danube flow'd that swept whole troops away,
 One drop of water, that refresh'd the dry,
 Shall raise a fountain of eternal joy.

But ah ! to that unknown and distant date 115
 Is Virtue's great reward push'd off by Fate ;
 Here random shafts in ev'ry breast are found,
 Virtue and merit but provoke the wound.

August in native worth and regal state,
 Anna sat arbitress of Europe's fate ; 120
 To distant realms did ev'ry accent fly,
 And nations watch'd each motion of her eye.
 Silent, nor longer awful to be seen,
 How small a spot contains the mighty Queen !
 No throng of suppliant princes mark the place, 125
 Where Britain's greatness is compos'd in peace :
 The broken earth is scarce discern'd to rise,
 And a stone tells us where the monarch lies.

Thus end maturest honours of the crown !
 This is the last conclusion of renown ! 130

So when, with idle skill, the wanton boy
 Breathes thro' his tube, he sees, with eager joy,
 The trembling bubble, in its rising small,
 And, by degrees, expands the glittering ball ;
 But when, to full perfection blown, it flies 135
 High in the air, and shines in various dyes,
 The little monarch, with a falling tear,
 Sees his world burst at once, and disappear.

'Tis not in sorrow to reverse our doom ;
 No groans unlock th' inexorable tomb ; 140
 Why then this fond indulgence of our woe !
 What fruit can rise, or what advantage flow !
 Yes, this advantage from our deep distress,
 We learn how much in George the gods can bless.
 Had a less glorious princess left the throne, 145
 But half the hero had at first been shewn ;
 And Anna falling all the King employs,
 To vindicate from guilt our rising joys :

Our joys arise, and innocently shine,
Auspicious monarch ! what a praise is thine ! 150

Welcome, great Stranger ! to Britannia's throne !
Nor let thy country think thee all her own.
Of thy delay how oft did we complain !
Our hopes reach'd out, and met thee on the main.
With pray'r we smooth'd the billows for thy fleet,
With ardent wishes filled thy swelling sheet ; 156

And when thy foot took place on Albion's shore,
We bending bless'd the gods, and ask'd no more.
What hand but thine should conquer and compose,
Join those whom int'rest joins, and chase our foes ?
Repel the daring youth's presumptuous aim, 161
And by his rival's greatness give him fame !
Now in some foreign court he may sit down,
And quit, without a blush, the British crown,
Secure his honour, tho' he lose his store, 165
And take a lucky moment to be poor.

Nor think, great Sir ! now first, at this late hour,
In Britain's favour you exert your pow'r :
To us, far back in time, I joy to trace
The num'rous tokens of your princely grace. 170
Whether you chuse to thunder on the Rhine,
Inspire grave councils, or in courts to shine :
In the more scenes your genius was display'd,
The greater debt was on Britannia laid :
They all conspir'd this mighty man to raise, 175
And your new subjects proudly share the praise.

All share : but may not we have leave to boast,
That we contemplate and enjoy it most ?
This ancient nurse of arts, indulg'd by Fate
On gentle Isis' bank, a calm retreat, 180
For many rolling ages justly fam'd,
Has thro' the world her loyalty proclaim'd ;
And often pour'd (too well the truth is known !)
Her blood and treasure to support the throne ;
For England's church her latest accent strain'd, 185
And freedom with her dying hand retain'd ;
No wonder then her various ranks agree
In all the fervencies of zeal for thee.

ON THE DEATH OF QUEEN ANNE. 287

What tho' thy birth a distant kingdom boast,
And seas divide thee from the British coast? 190
The crown's impatient to enclose thy head;
Why stay thy feet? the cloth of gold is spread.
Our strict obedience thro' the world shall tell,
That king's a Briton who can govern well. 191

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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